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Man and the Incarnation

or

Man's Place in the Universe as Determined
by his Relations to the Incarnate Son

By

Samuel J. Andrews

Author of "The Life of Our Lord upon the Earth," "Christianity and
Antichristianity," "God's Revelations of Himself to Men," etc.



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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to those Christians, few or many, who trust in the Incarnate Son of God as their Saviour, but who are troubled and fearful as they see the Antichristian movements and tendencies around them—in hope that their faith in Him as the Living One and Lord over all, may be strengthened, and they be encouraged to wait patiently till He shall manifest Himself in the power and glory of His Kingdom.

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is written for those only who believe that Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Son of God, very God and very Man, and its object is to place Him before them in that position which befits the dignity of His Person, and the greatness of His work. To those who deny the personality of God, or the Trinity, or the Incarnation, what is here written will have no force, since these are assumed to be true. They lie at the basis of the Scriptures, and have been formulated by the Church in her Creeds. Placing the Incarnation—the union of the Divine and human in the Person of the Son—in the centre, we may see how all the acts of God in creation are related to Him, and what is the place of man in the universe. It is only when the God-man is seen as the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, that we can understand either God's creative or redemptive work. The twilight of unbelief that is settling down upon the Church is because the glory of His Person is hidden; and if faith is to be restored, it will not be by learned discourses about Him, much less by criticisms of the Scriptures, but by having our eyes anointed with eye salve

that we may see Him in His Divine Majesty. The more He is hidden from our eyes, whatever may be the causes, intellectual or moral, the deeper the darkness that must come down over Christendom, and the greater the anxiety and fear of the Christian heart.

To put the Incarnate Son, the God-man, in His central place in the Divine economy, as set forth in the Scriptures and in the Creeds, is the purpose of this book. To do this, we must go back to the beginning, ere the creative work began, and see in spirit the only begotten Son come forth from the bosom of the Father to reveal Him; the first step in this revelation being the creation of the worlds. In this, He appears as the Word, the Revealer. All true knowledge of the Godhead, and of the Divine purpose in Creation, and of creature history must come through Him. He is the source of all life, and only through Him as the Mediator can any creature enter into the holy presence of the Father. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

It is evident that the consciousness of the need of giving to the fact of the Incarnation a far higher place than modern Christianity gives it, is deepening in the minds of many. It is felt that Christ must become more and more to us, or He will become less and less. Already He seems to have become to many professed believers little more than a name, a far-off misty star in the twilight

of the past; or He is honoured by others as a great ethical Teacher and social Reformer now long dead, upon whose grave we may lay our garlands, and celebrate His humanitarian labours in flowery orations.

We cannot speak here of all the causes concurring to bring about this partial disbelief in the Incarnate Son as the Living Head of the Church, and Lord over all, but two may be mentioned as active and influential at the present time. The first is the growing disbelief in the trustworthiness of the Bible. Let us note this, and consider the relation between the Book and the Incarnate Son, and the place which each should hold in our religious belief and spiritual life.

The earnest contest going on to-day about the Bible, its inspiration and authority, is known to all. Modern criticism has undermined the faith of many in its trustworthiness, and is more and more aggressive. But this contest is, in fact, of far less importance than it seems, and need not affect Christian faith, for this faith does not stand in any written records, but in Him who has caused these records to be made for our instruction. Our interest in them is that they teach us of God's actings in the past, and thus prepare us to understand His actings in the present. They are, therefore, necessary for us, and most profitable (1 Cor. 10: 11), but they are not to be overvalued. Their purpose must be

kept steadily in view, and their relation to the Living Head of the Church. They tell us who He is and bring us to Him that He may speak to us. It seems to be the belief of many that when the canon of Scripture was closed, no more words from God were to be spoken to men. If His will was to be known by later generations, it must be by studying the past in the sacred records, and drawing inferences for our present guidance from His earlier words. There would be no more utterances through inspired men, the door Heavenward was shut when the Lord ascended. God, who had spoken by the prophets and by His Son, had no further revelations of His will and purpose to make.

Let us now consider more closely the relation of the Bible to the Living Head of the Church in view of the coming of the Spirit. Just before His death, He declared: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Must they remain unsaid? No. "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth. . . . What things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak, and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come." (John 16: 12, 13.)

(Note: In a recent commentary on these words, it is said, "We are led to think, not of new revelations, but of earlier teaching deepened by experience. . . . The words, 'He shall declare

unto you the things that are to come,' mean only new applications of what had been already revealed.'")

It is because the Church is the body of Christ and is indwelt of the Holy Ghost, that it may have continual revelations of the Divine will, and teaching and guidance adapted to the ever-changing circumstances of its history. And such teaching and guidance are provided for in the constitution of the Church. Acting and speaking through appointed ministries and ordinances, there is continual light cast by its Head over its pathway, and no dangers, spiritual or temporal, can come upon it unwarned by the Spirit. As the Jews were not led through the wilderness by the

¹ That the words of the Lord mean much more than this seems clear. That through personal experience the Scriptures are better understood, and that the Lord's words present new and deeper meanings, is a fact well known to all Christians; but the point here is not as to the better understanding of old revelations, but as to the giving of new. The Lord when about to leave the earth promised to His disciples that He would bring to remembrance all that He had said to them,—a promise fulfilled in the Gospels. The Holy Spirit, whom He would send, would speak new truths, truths which He Himself could not speak: "Whatsoever things the Holy Spirit shall hear,"—new things,—“these shall He speak,” and He shall also declare the future, the things that are to come. As the work of redemption goes on, the Lord will make known to the Church its special perils, labours, and duties. We have in this promise the foundation of the prophetic ministry as set in the Church for its warning and instruction.

study of a guide-book, but by the pillar of cloud and fire going before, and marking out the way, so the Church is led through the wilderness of this world, not by a book, but walking in the light of its Head, who goes before it to mark out its pathway, and protect it from dangers. As of old He led His people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron, so would He lead them to-day by His servants till He has brought them in safety into their inheritance (Ps. 77: 20).

Let me be not understood as disparaging the high place of the Bible in making known the Divine purpose and in guiding the Church, and in our individual religious life; but let us not disparage Christ in relation to the Book. He must have the first place, the Book can have only the second. He is the living and acting Head; it is only the record of what has been. The Church can no more be governed by a printed book than can the State. Its contents are of inestimable value, for we can rightly understand the present only as we know the past, both as to its facts and principles; but we live in the present, our trials, our dangers are new, and God will not leave the Church at any period of her history ignorant of the dangers gathering around her, or neglect to teach her her duties from day to day. If to those under the old covenant He could say, "Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto . . .

all My servants, the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them," will He do less to His children to-day? (Jer. 7: 25; 2 Chron. 36: 15.) The manna of yesterday did not suffice for to-day.

If we keep the Bible and the Church, as enlightened and guided by her Head, in right relations to one another, we shall not be much troubled at the assaults made upon the Book. It is by no means necessary that we affirm the verbal inspiration of the Bible as a condition of belief in Christ. Indeed, to do this shows a rationalistic spirit, a craving for intellectual certainty. There is the certainty of faith, but that can come only by abiding in Him who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. All certainty in the spiritual realm is the fruit of the Spirit, who Himself beareth witness with our spirit. We have reason to fear that with many the Bible holds an abnormal place, and one that limits the Head of the Church in the exercise of His prerogatives, both of guidance and of rule. When they should look to Him they look to the Book; they believe that the Holy Spirit will speak to them through the silent letter, not through the living voice.

The Bible, as a historical record, tells of the Divine actings in a distant past. Whatever of blessing or of judgment has been done in the past abides in its results, and these must affect us though we are not responsible for them. The

question before us is: Is it necessary for us to know that the record is in every particular an accurate one? Its accuracy or inaccuracy does not affect the past in itself, but our knowledge of it. If, indeed, it can be said that the record is so false in any of its fundamental statements as to render us uncertain as to the Divine purpose in His Son, and in man, and as to our own duties to God, then the primary step would be to investigate the record and separate the true and false elements. But this is not the case. The great facts of the creation of the world, of man made in God's likeness, of his sin and fall, of the Incarnation, of the Lord's redemptive work,—all these being clearly stated and believed by us, it matters very little if we cannot reconcile all the statements of antediluvian tradition, or of Jewish history, or even those of the Gospels.

Closely analysed, we see that to demand verbal inspiration is really to demand that the Bible must be an infallible book. The reasoning, put in syllogistic form, is simply this: The Bible sets forth the Divine purpose in man, and is given us for our learning the truth. But how can we be certain that it is the truth, except the book be infallible? Therefore, we must accept its verbal inspiration, its absolute immunity from error. It is in the same way that the Church, as a whole, or its chief ministers—the apostles and the prophets—are proved to be infallible. The bib-

lical writers must have had a perfect apprehension of the Divine revelation and actings, and have made a perfect record of them. This craving for infallibility both shows the absence of spiritual perception, and is destructive of faith. The Lord when on earth said: The sheep hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, and follow Him, for they know His voice, but they know not the voice of strangers. If it were so then, is it not so now? Has the Lord now no sheep who can distinguish His voice from the voice of strangers? Must He remain silent? Must the Holy Ghost forbear to speak because no one can know whether a true or a false prophet is speaking, whether the word is from Heaven or from the pit?

We may, then, read the criticism of the Bible without fear or anxiety. Our faith stands in Christ, our Living Head. If He be not the Living Head, our Teacher and Guide, no book can take His place. Let the most advanced critics prove to their satisfaction that the biblical records are full of discrepancies, and contradictions, and myths; if the Incarnate Son remains, all their criticisms avail nothing, we may safely pass them by. Even destroy the Book, the Son stands behind the veil, and can at any moment manifest Himself. He is His own witness, His existence to-day is the decisive proof of the truthfulness of the Scripture records in all their chief features. The biblical presentation of the whole course of

God's dealing with men as given in them, having Him as its centre, is plain and consistent. He is the First and the Last. No intelligent reader can mistake as to the intent of the biblical history as a witness to Him. If we know the fountain-head of a river and its mouth, we need not be disturbed if we cannot follow it in all its winding ways, through forests and thickets and dark ravines. Though hidden here and there from view, we know that it is one and the self-same stream. The Bible is not a patchwork, though many writers of many centuries have part in it, but a unit, because the purpose of God in His Son is one. It is the unity of His Person that gives unity to human history. We can trace its historical continuity from Genesis to Revelation, from the earth as made good to the earth as made new. With this we may be well content.

The second of the causes already spoken of as most influential in undermining the faith of the Church in the Incarnate Son, is the immensity of the universe as made known by the recent discoveries of astronomers. It is said that the place given to man and to the earth in the Scriptures is wholly inconsistent with what we know of other worlds and their probable inhabitants. Some affirm that man is a creature too weak and mean to be the highest rational being in the universe, as the Scriptures imply. There must be others far higher and nobler, but if there are

such, it is not credible that the inferior nature of man could have been assumed by the Son of God in perpetual union. We may rather believe that the Hebrews and later the Church in their astronomical ignorance, believing the earth to be the central orb around which the sun revolved, have given man a position far higher than he deserved, and made him the one special object of God's care. Now, through our enlarged knowledge we can see the earth and the universe in their true relations to one another, and as we have given up the earth's central position and man's supreme place, so, it is said, we must give up the Incarnation as having taken place here, and as a fact of vital interest to other creatures.

As the question of the relation of the Incarnation to Creation, and of man to other reasonable creatures will be considered later, we do not dwell upon them here; but we believe that it will be clearly seen that the only explanation of the vastness of the universe, and of its many mysteries, is found in the Incarnation, and that the exalted place given to man in the Scriptures is the necessary result of the Divine purpose that, through humanity as a medium of manifestation, He would make Himself known to His creatures. Neither the worlds nor the Scriptures can be rightly understood except as seen in the light of the Incarnate Son.

If we are sometimes appalled at the vastness of

the universe, its many millions of worlds as affirmed by the astronomers, and are led to ask in doubt, "Can man indeed hold so high a place as the Bible gives him?" we are to remember that God, a moral and spiritual Being, can love and regard only those who are moral and spiritual like Himself, and to them only can He really manifest Himself. Mere masses of matter as such, however wonderful in constitution, can have no value in His eyes, nor can they indeed have value in our eyes except as we see in them the proofs of His power, wisdom, and goodness. Only as inhabited by rational beings can they have a moral interest for us.

But we may be reminded here, in entering upon our further inquiries, that as regards both Creation and Incarnation, we are wholly in the region of faith. We have need to cry earnestly and continually, "Lord, increase our faith."

But accepted by faith, we see how through the God-man man is of all His creatures brought nearest to God, and into most blessed communion with Him. But the religious history of the race shows us that man has from the first refused to believe in the full reality of the Divine love. His promises of blessing and communion have been too large for our faith. All generations hearing His words have said in their hearts, "It is not possible that God means what He has said. His words can be fulfilled only in a far lower sense

than they read." And to-day, not giving to the God-Man, our Brother, His proper place as the One through whom we draw nigh to the Father, and through whom we learn to know His wisdom and His love, we soon come to distrust the Scriptures, and to doubt the Divine sincerity, The vision of His Person obscured, the Scriptures become to us as the words of a book that is sealed (Isa. 29: 11). Only as abiding in Him can our faith rise to the greatness of His promises.

The Church accepts as a present fact the Incarnation. The Son of God made man is the corner-stone on whom the whole structure of Christianity rests. Let us, so far as we may, follow the fact to its legitimate results, placing Him in the centre of all Divine revelation. To do this is the purpose of the present writing. If we would know God, we must know the Incarnate Son, His Revealer; if we would know the Church, His body, we must know Him the Head; if we would know the true meaning of the Scriptures, we must read them in the light of the Divine purpose in Him; if we would know His Kingdom, we must know Him as the immortal and glorified Lord.

Why, I may ask, in conclusion, should we not take the Old Testament in its plain, obvious meaning as a true account of God's dealings with men from the beginning to the birth of His Son? But in its perusal, two things are to be kept in

mind. First: That the knowledge of these dealings, from whatever source derived, comes to us through fallible men. Let us admit, for the moment, that there may be, therefore, as many claim, mistakes, discrepancies, or even contradictions, in the presentation of events so remote; what does it really matter? We may look upon the biblical writers as upon witnesses in a court of justice. The end of a trial is secured when the substantial facts are reached amid the varying details. What is of vital importance in biblical study is to learn the Divine purpose in man, how it has been carried on, and what is its present stage. It is here as with a man's purpose to build a house. This purpose is so far accomplished that we see the house, not, indeed, completed, but standing before us, strong and stately. We do not inquire carefully into all the preliminary stages of its construction. The building is before us, it speaks for itself. Thus in looking upon the Divine purpose in humanity, we know that the essential step to its fulfilment has been reached in the Incarnation of the Son. That purpose is not, indeed, completed; the Incarnate Son has yet much to do to finish His redemptive work. But the great vital fact is before us, the Son has become Man. This authenticates the past and assures the future. He is now at God's right hand, crowned with glory and honour, the ever-living Head of the Church; and what He has

already done gives us the perfect confidence that He will finish His work. He is the Beginning and the End.

Let it, then, be granted that the old biblical records have been made by fallible men; the Divine purpose is not, therefore, through their errors brought to naught. The accomplished fact of the Incarnation remains. The Virgin's son now lives, God's present Witness. If, in exploring the past in its written records, we walk, as some of the critics tell us, upon the shifting sands of tradition, where is no certain foothold, we now stand upon the solid rock; we hear the voice of the risen Lord saying, "I am the truth." "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." How He makes known from Heaven the truth to His listening disciples will be later considered.

The other point which we are to keep in mind as we read the Old Testament and are tempted to disbelieve its miracles, its far-reaching prophecies, its many marvellous narratives, is that the fact on which all rests—the Incarnation—is a fact so strange, so unexampled, so inexplicable, as measured by any intellectual standard, that we can receive it only by faith. And so receiving it, we are lifted up into a region of thought and action far higher than that of our ordinary life. The history of our race has thus both a human and a Divine side, there is a life within a life.

It can be read from two distinct points of view, often spoken of as the secular and the sacred, from one of which it is most credible, from the other, incredible. Let us take, as an illustration, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. A Babylonian historian would have seen in this only an ordinary event, the conquest and destruction of an hostile city, and the captivity of its inhabitants, an event of as little significance as the destruction of any provincial city. To one seeing it in the light of the Divine purpose, the destruction of the Temple and the captivity of the covenant people were most momentous events in the Divine order, determining the whole future history of the Jews, and of the nations to the present hour.

Or, to take another example,—the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, and His crucifixion; what could a Roman historian have seen in them but the rightful rejection and punishment of a false claimant to a Divine commission? Of those gathered around His cross, only the eye of faith discerned the Son of God, or could know the world-wide and eternal significance of His death.

Human history has thus to “spiritual discernment,” to the anointed eye, a meaning and significance which it can have to none who see in it only the actings of men, and cannot discern the hand of God working out His own purpose. But those having this discernment are

not troubled when they read in the Scriptures of strange and marvellous events, of acts of super-human power, of angels and devils in fierce conflict. The only question which they ask is whether these events, these actings, these actors, stand in a right relation to the Divine purpose in Christ as made known to us, and are fitting means to its accomplishment. They are to be judged by the heavenly, not by the earthly standard.

From this point of view, we see the error of those who say that we must judge the historical records of the Hebrews as we would the historical records of any ancient people. God, they affirm, is equally present in all history, and, therefore, the distinction of sacred and secular is to be put away. Anything incredible in a history of Greece or Rome is equally incredible in the Bible. God is thus put out of human history, man is constituted the sole judge both of what has been and will be. A Divine purpose is wholly ignored. Faith in the Divine action failing, the Bible becomes more and more unintelligible and incredible.

But let it not be thought that in thus speaking of the Scriptures in their relation to Christ—that it is “in Him that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden,” not in a book,—we imply that their meaning and value for us are by any means exhausted, and that we are to rely upon new revelations from the ascended Lord. Far

from this. There are doubtless unexhausted treasures of knowledge in the Bible, historic and prophetic, which will in due time be brought to light. The progress of events will cast light upon its pages, and the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writers, will interpret their words in their relation to the Divine purpose in the Son. Not till that purpose is completed, and His redemptive work ended, can the Bible cease to be of the highest practical value to all God's children; and we may believe that through all ages it will have profound significance as a history of God's dealings with men.

If the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, the Son of the Virgin is at God's right hand, having all authority and dominion in heaven and earth, the Scriptures are proved to be a true record of God's dealings with men; if He be not, the book is doomed to sink to the level of those sacred books which have no prophetic, but simply an ethical, value—another example of the delusive beliefs which have marked the religious history of our race. Christ will live without the book, the book cannot live without Christ.

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Man and the Incarnation

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CHAPTER I

CHRISTIANITY: WHAT IT IS

THE nature of a religion is determined by its conception of a Supreme Being. Of the religions of the world, only three are monotheistic—Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. The last of these is distinguished as holding a Trinity in the Godhead, three Persons and one God; and as holding the Incarnation of the Son, the second Person.

The Trinity is an eternal reality; but the Incarnation is a fact, something done in time. These two are the distinguishing and essential doctrines of Christianity. In this discussion, we assume that these doctrines, as expressed in the three great creeds of the Church, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian, are true. Of the Trinity, we have no occasion to speak here except to note that the eternal constitution of the Godhead determines all Divine action. Without

the threefold Personality, no Incarnation were possible. Nor do we attempt to define here how the union of the Divine and human could be effected, but believe that Jesus Christ was and is very God and very Man, and will continue to be so for ever. It has been truly said that the words "God was made Man" are perhaps of all others those which call for implicit acquiescence, and the renunciation of curiosity and inquisitive reasoning. It is apparent upon the face of it that this union is one of transcendent importance, not only for human history, but for the history of the universe, not only for the past, but for the present and future.

To take a creature nature into inseparable union with His own, is the most wonderful of all God's acts, that which is most difficult of intellectual comprehension, and yet that which lies at the basis of our knowledge of His character and of His purpose in Creation. It is not, like the creation of the worlds, an exercise of power and wisdom, and the product something external to Himself; but it is to take a created nature into the Godhead, or, as expressed in the Athanasian Creed, "taking of the manhood into God," and thus to establish such a relation of community between the Creator and the creature as would not otherwise be possible. God may build countless worlds in successive ages, He has but one Incarnate Son. The Incarnation can never be

repeated. The Creator and the creature are for ever united in the Person of the Son.¹

As the Incarnate Son—Perfect God and Perfect Man,—He stands in a twofold relation, on the one side to God, and on the other to the creature, and these relations must be carefully distinguished. As the visible Image of the Invisible God, He is the Revealer; as made flesh, and taking the sins of men upon Himself, He is the Saviour. His work is one—and yet twofold.

It is ever to be kept in mind that Christianity has a scope far larger than that of redemption. When the Son has finished His work as Saviour of sinners, a transitory work, then His eternal work as the glorified Revealer of God does first and fully begin. But as He took upon Himself the office of the Revealer before the worlds were made, and as such was the Father's instrument in their creation, we must consider some preliminary points, and the first of these is the respective relations of the Father and the Son to the creative work, as taught us in the Scriptures.

If in the following discussions little mention is

¹ As I am assuming the truthfulness of the great creeds of the Church, I am not called to enter into any proofs of this. No Christian body has, so far as I know, ever called it in question, or affirmed a re-incarnation in other worlds as possible. Some individuals have indeed spoken of a *de-incarnation* as effected by the Lord's death, which shows that they made no real distinction between Incarnation and theophany.

made of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead, and of His work in creation and redemption, it is because of the desire to bring into special prominence the relations of the Father and Son. In the Incarnation itself, and in the Lord's work in the several stages of redemption, the co-operation of the Spirit was essential, and is clearly set forth in the Gospels and embodied in the Creeds, but we here accept results without asking how effected. The point to be kept in mind is that neither the Father nor the Spirit acted independently, but always in co-operation with the Son.

CHAPTER II

THE PLACE OF THE SON AS CREATOR

THE biblical accounts of the Creation may be summed up in the statements in Genesis and in John's Gospel.

Genesis 1: 1.—“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Here four points are presented for our examination: (*a*) the Beginning; (*b*) the Creator; (*c*) the Creation; (*d*) its extent.

John 1: 1-3 (R. V.).—“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made.”

Here the same points meet us as in Genesis: (*a*) the Beginning; (*b*) the Creator; (*c*) the Creation; (*d*) its extent.

(*a*) “In the Beginning,”—the beginning of creation. The Creation marks the boundary line between time and eternity. Time is the measure of duration, and can be applied only to created things. It has no application to God. Time began when He began to create. It is absurd to

ask why He did not create before He did. If we go back countless millions of years, the question remains: Why not before? Eternity has no chronology.

(b) The Creator. In Genesis, it is God (Heb., *Elohim*). In John, it is the Word (Greek, *Logos*). In this there is no contradiction, the explanation being that God created the worlds through the Son as the Word. The declarations of the Scriptures on this point are very express (Heb. 1: 2, 10; Col. 1: 16). In the primary order, it is the will of the Father that determines all, and therefore the work of creation is His work, but is wrought through the Son. "There is one God, the Father, . . . of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him" (1 Cor. 8: 6). "All things were made by Him, and without Him"—without His agency, or without reference to Him—"was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1: 3). "God hath spoken unto us in His Son, . . . through whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1: 2).

The question now meets us: Why is the Son here called by the Apostle "The Word"? Does it mark something distinctive in His place and work? What part has He as the Word in Creation?

At this point, it will be well to consider the several relations in which the Son stands to the Father as presented in the Scriptures.

We have in them the Son, the second Person of the Godhead, presented to us under two general aspects: first, as the only begotten Son, existent with the Father before the worlds; secondly, as assuming human nature, the Incarnate Son. As the only begotten Son, He is coeternal and coequal with the Father. As the Incarnate Son, He takes a position of inferiority. As is said in the Athanasian Creed, "He is equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood." As the second Person of the Godhead, He is like the other Persons, invisible; as the Incarnate Son, He is the Father's visible Image, the Revealer of the Godhead.

With the Son's place in the eternal constitution of the Godhead we are not here concerned, only with His place as the Revealer. Examining this in the light of the Scriptures, we find three distinct and successive relations in which He stands to the Father, and into which His work of revelation may be divided. He appears and acts, first as the Word, then as the Incarnate Son, then as the Glorified Lord. Each of these stages of His work has its distinctive character.

It is with the first of these only, His place as the Word, that any doubt can arise. Without entering at length into exegetical questions, some passages of Scripture must be referred to, and the first of these is that in John (1: 18): "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,

He hath declared Him." To what period are we to refer this being in the bosom of the Father? To His eternal Sonship? Or, as many affirm, to the relation into which He entered after His ascension? The first seems far the most probable, and in accordance with the context. The only begotten Son, the Son of His love (John 17: 24), comes forth from the invisibility of the Godhead to declare, or make known, the Father. As yet no created worlds exist, no reasonable beings to whom He can be made known. The first step in revelation must, therefore, be the creation of the worlds and their inhabitants. By whom should this be done? Doubtless by the concurrent action of all the Persons, but here we regard it as especially the work of the Father and the Son. In this creative work, are they co-equal? As we have seen, the Father is said to create through the Son. In this, the Son appears as the agent or instrument by whom the Father acts. He takes in substance the same place of subordination which He took after the Incarnation by birth of the Virgin. And it is taken voluntarily. There is no conflict of wills, the will of the Son is always in unison with the Father's will. It was in Creation as in His work on earth, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing" (John 5: 19).

The creation of the worlds is thus a revelation of the invisible Godhead made by the Son. Out

of the Invisible comes forth the visible. Now with God exist also the worlds, and the Son as the Creator is the Revealer. He has not yet, indeed, taken a created nature as a medium of manifestation, for there is no created nature to be taken, no reasonable beings to whom He can be manifested. But the relation of the Son to the Father as His Revealer, is already established in the Divine purpose. Henceforth He stands before the Father as the Incarnate Son, though the Incarnation itself, through His birth of the Virgin, is in the distant future.

It is from this point of view that we may understand St. John's statements respecting the Word. He uses this term because he speaks of the Son as the Creator: and as such, the Revealer. A new relation is now seen, and this is expressed by the term "Word."

It is well known that the Greek term "Logos" (Word) has a twofold meaning; it may express the inward thought of the mind, or its utterance in speech. As the inward, unuttered thought of God, the Son may be called the "Word," dwelling from eternity in the bosom of the Father; as the uttered thought, or as the Revealer of the Father's mind, He is the Spoken Word. He now comes forth from the Father's bosom to declare Him. It is said by Cremer (*Lex.*): "As the Logos, He is the expression and representation of what God has to say to the world; in whom and by whom

God's mind and purpose towards the world find their expression." It is probable that the Apostle in the term "Word" embraced both meanings—the eternal relation within the Godhead of the Son to the Father as "the only begotten"; and His relation to Him in time as His "visible Image," or Revealer to His creatures. And the latter revelation is based upon the former. He could not be the visible Image of the Father unless His image as the only begotten Son. But it is the second relationship—the Son as the Spoken Word—which, as we shall see, is chiefly presented by St. John, and is what now concerns us.

We may say, then, that as a thought in one's mind is made known to others only as it is spoken, so the Son becomes God's Spoken Word, or Revealer, through whom He makes Himself known to His creatures. The term "Word," therefore, involves more than the internal and unseen relation of Divine Sonship. As the eternal Son, one of the Persons of the Godhead, He stands in the same invisible relation to created beings as the Father and the Spirit. Like them, He "dwells in light unapproachable, whom no man has seen nor can see." To reveal the Godhead to created beings and become the Father's visible Image, He must assume other relations, both to it and to them. By entering into these new relations, He becomes the Word. He comes out of the

bosom of the Father where He dwelt before the worlds were made, that He may reveal Him, and may be His representative; and thus through Him the reasonable creatures, not yet made, may know and have communion with the Father.

In the light of these relations of the Son to the Father, let us examine some passages of the Scriptures. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (1: 1, R. V.) we read:

God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions, and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they. (R. V.)

Here the Son is spoken of in three differing relations to the Father. First, in His work when on the earth as the Incarnate Son. God speaks by Him as by the prophets of old, and He also made purification of sin by His death. Secondly, He is spoken of as the Father's instrument by whom He made the worlds, and by Him He is appointed their heir. Again, His work on earth

being completed, He is exalted by the Father to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The question may be asked: Was the Son the Creator in His own right and by His own power, or as the agent of the Father and by the Father's power? Keeping always in mind the equality of the Persons of the Godhead, our answer must depend upon this: Did the Son before the Creation take in its principle the same relation of subordination to the Father as after His birth? If He did, there is no difficulty in admitting that the Father created through the Son, thus recognising the Son's secondary place. If the work He was to do as the Revealer and Redeemer involved an emptying of Himself, or as is said in the Athanasian Creed, "becoming inferior to the Father as touching His manhood," why might He not have taken the same subordinate place before His birth of the Virgin? On earth He said of Himself and His works: "I can of My own self do nothing . . . I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him which hath sent Me"; "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do" (John 5: 19, 30). Could He not have said this of Himself prior to His Incarnation? The relation of the Father and Son in the Godhead is immutable, but the Son taking upon Himself the place of the Father's visible Image, and about to assume a created nature, came necessarily within the limitations of creaturehood. He did

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not thus cease to be God, and equal to the Father, and yet could act as under Him. There was a position of subordination voluntarily taken, but there was perfect identity of will and act. There was a change of relation but none of the Persons.

We now turn to the examination of some other passages of Scripture, and first to the teachings of St. Paul (Col. 1: 14—). We have here, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Son presented to us in several relations to the Father. He is the Image of the invisible God. Being as the Eternal Son Himself invisible, this affirms a change whereby He becomes visible. He now takes the place of the Revealer, and is to be brought into relation with the creatures to whom He is to reveal the Godhead. But the worlds are not yet made, no reasonable creatures exist. His first work, therefore, is that of creation, and here we find the ground of His being called the "first-born of every creature" ("of all creation," R. V.). This cannot be applied to His eternal generation as the Son, for this would imply that He was the first of a series of creatures. But the term "first-born" may well be applied to Him as the Creator, for in Him were all things created. He as the Word was the Foundation, the Corner-stone upon whom the Creation should rest and in whom it should consist (Col. 1: 16). "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and

the heavens are the work of Thy hands." (Heb. 1: 10). In Him before the worlds were made they were foreordained, for it is said that "all things have been created through Him and unto Him." In the same sense we may understand the words, "The beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3: 14.). Although not Himself created, yet as the Creator in whom all created things had their origin, and the Corner-stone He may well be called the Beginning.

Some other expressions used of the Son, "the First and the Last," "the Beginning and End," "the Alpha and Omega," may imply absolute being without regard to time or highest pre-eminence. If the element of time be admitted, some limited work may be understood as that of Redemption. For us the matter is not one of importance.

We may here consider the Lord's words in His intercessory prayer (John 17: 4, 5): "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Is it the glory of the Eternal Sonship, His essential glory, for which He prays? But this He had not renounced, nor could the Father give it. It belonged to Him as one of the Persons of the Godhead, eternal, unchangeable. The glory for which he prayed could be only the glory which was His due as the Father's visible

Image, the Redeemer, the Administrator of His government, the appointed Lord over all His works. This glory could not be manifested till He had finished the work the Father had given Him to do. Not till His resurrection could He appear in the glory which was His when, anterior to Creation, He stood before the Father as the predestined Heir of all, and His Representative to all creatures. He could not enter into this His glory till made immortal. Then could He sit at the Father's right hand (Luke 24: 26). It was this glory which the Father gave Him that He could give to His disciples (John 17: 22). Of this He could make them partakers, but not of His essential glory.

In their eagerness to maintain the Deity of the Son against the assaults of the Arians and the Socinians, many of the early Fathers and Reformers cited some of the texts we have been considering, as proofs of the Son's eternal pre-existence, and were, therefore, compelled to affirm a subordination of the Son to the Father in the constitution of the Godhead itself,—a subordination not consistent with their coequality. But if we consider these terms not as spoken of the Eternal Son so far as regards His Person, but of Him as standing to the Father in the relation of His Revealer,—the Word,—the difficulties are removed. The Father could make the worlds through Him, could appoint Him the Heir of all,

could glorify Him, could give Him all authority and power in Heaven and earth, and this without denying or disparaging His eternal Sonship and coequality. The subordination is not so much in the Divine constitution as in the Divine economy, a relation taken by the three Persons with reference to certain ends. How far a subordination was involved in the relation of Father and Son before the worlds were made, we need not here inquire. Theologians have generally held that this was the basis of the relation manifested in the Creation.

(c) The Creation. Having considered the second point proposed for our examination, and seen the Son, as the Word, to have been the Creator under the Father, we proceed to the act of creation itself.

One point here meets us upon which a word may be said. Some philosophers have affirmed that it is impossible for the human mind to conceive of anything as beginning to exist, or once existing, to cease to exist. Creation and annihilation are both alike unthinkable. But with metaphysical subtleties of this kind we are not here concerned. The Church, in agreement with the Scriptures and the general belief of men, has always affirmed that the universe had a beginning. It was brought into being by the will of God. It was created.¹

¹ The common expression, "Created out of nothing," may be objected to as implying that nothing is a substance out of

But of the manner and process of creation, except so far as the plain biblical statements go, the Church affirms nothing. Here physical science has full scope for its investigations. The great end of creation is, as all admit, the good of the reasonable creatures that God would make. His power and wisdom are seen in the physical universe, and the more clearly seen as this is better known. But the universe in its material constitution is only a means to an end, and has but a minor place in the Divine economy. Aside from furnishing habitations for moral beings, it can have no value in the eyes of its Creator.

(d) Creation's Extent. The last point is the extent of the Creation. Some have affirmed it to be infinite, on the ground that God is infinite, and that a finite creation is unworthy of Him. Others affirm that He "creates by a necessity of His nature" and that He always has been and always will be creating. This makes a universe not distinguishable in thought from an infinite one. Of this infinitude the Bible says nothing, and it is wholly inconsistent with what is revealed to us of the purpose of God in His Son. In Genesis, we are simply told that "God created the heaven and the earth," without defining the heavens as to their extent. The present general

which something can be made. A better expression of the creative act is that something now exists that did not exist before.

belief on physical grounds among astronomers seems to be that the universe is finite; some who make God to be only a Force or Energy, and impersonal, assert its eternity as well as its infinity.

But the creative work of the Word embraced more than the mere material orbs. "In Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things have been created through Him and unto Him" (Col. 1: 16). Whatever rational beings exist, or may hereafter exist, in the universe, their existence springs from the purpose of God in the Incarnation of His Son; and their relations to Him as Incarnate determine what their powers shall be, and what place in His universal Kingdom they shall hold.

Thus from our examination of the biblical accounts of the creation, we reach the conclusion that before creation began, it was resolved in the Divine counsels that the Son should take to Himself a created nature, and in and through it be the Revealer of the Godhead to the rational beings the Father was about to make, and it is as such that He is called the Word. The actual union of the Divine and created natures could not then take place, for no creature had been made; yet did the Son, anterior to creation, enter upon His office as the Word, and through Him

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the Father created the world. But His full work as manifesting the Father and acting for Him, could not be till rational and moral beings were made, and He became to them the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Thus we reach the conclusion that the Divine purpose to create the world and reasonable beings, was dependent upon the purpose that the Son should take to Himself a creature nature, and thus manifest the Godhead. The Father abides in the Infinite and Eternal. The Son comes forth into the finite and temporal. The Father, is invisible. The Son appears, His visible Image. Creation is the means to this end, and it is in itself revelation.

Looking backward, we see on the border line that separates eternity and time, while as yet no created world or being exists, the majestic form of the Word; coming forth from the bosom of the Father, and waiting to hear His voice calling Him to enter upon His creative work. The Father, dwelling in the Infinite and Invisible, would manifest Himself in the finite and visible, and He finds in the Son one who can thus manifest Him, one who can unite in His person the Infinite and the Finite, the Uncreated and the Created.

The future assumption by the Son of a created and finite nature, thus coming under the limitations of space and time, and so able to

manifest God to all created beings, was a step determined upon in the Divine Counsels preparatory to Creation. Now can the creative work begin, and the heavens be filled with shining orbs, declaring the glory of God. And what a glorious future will open, when these orbs, now empty and silent, shall be inhabited by rational moral beings made in the Image of the glorified Son, and songs of thanksgiving and praise be for ever heard resounding through the celestial realms!

To guard against confusion of terms, it will be well to state how they are here used, as based upon the relations of the Son to the Father, and to men:

(a) He is the only begotten Son, the second Person of the Godhead, dwelling from eternity in the bosom of the Father, invisible;

(b) The Revealer, the Creator, the Word, the Father's Representative;

(c) The Incarnate Son, the Word made flesh, the visible Image;

(d) The risen and glorified Lord, Ruler over all.

After the Son took upon Him, under the Father, the place and office of the Revealer, His work was twofold: (a) to create the worlds, and their inhabitants; (b) after the fall of man, to act as the Redeemer, and the Administrator of God's moral government down to the time of His birth of the Virgin. He became the Incarnate Son by the assumption of human nature. As such, His

work is threefold: (a) to bear in mortal flesh the sins of the world, and make atonement; (b) as risen from the dead to become the Head of the Church, immortal and glorified; (c) redemption completed, to rule over all God's works, and to be to all creatures His visible Image for ever.

When the term "Word" is here used, it denotes the Son in His work of revealing God prior to His Incarnation by birth of the Virgin, the first stage being that of Creation, and then that of Redemption, the last continuing to the Incarnation itself. All His work as the Word was pre-incarnate; since the Incarnation, all His work has been done as the Incarnate Son, the God-man.

In Proverbs, Wisdom, which had been spoken of as an attribute of God, is personified, and takes an objective position in relation to Him. It is said by Oehler (*Old Test. Theology*, Trans.) that "Wisdom is the principle of the world laid down by God, and not a creature like things in the world, its coming forth from God being on the contrary the presupposition of the world's creation." He adds: "Ewald found in this passage an echo of the subsequent idea of the Logos." Perhaps we may better say a glimpse of the Logos as the world Creator, set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. "The Word was with God."

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlast-

ing, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the beginning of the dust of the world. When He established the heavens, I was there: when He set a circle upon the face of the deep; when He made firm the skies above; when the fountains of the deep became strong; when He gave to the sea its bound, that the waters should not transgress His commandment; when He marked out the foundations of the earth; then I was by Him, as a master workman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in His habitable earth; and my delight was with the sons of men (Prov. 8: 22-31). (R. V.)

CHAPTER III

GOD'S MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF THROUGH THE SON

IT was the will of God to create material worlds as the habitation of reasonable and moral beings made in His own Image. But how can He, the Infinite, Eternal, Unchangeable, Incomprehensible One, manifest Himself to them when made? how bring them into communion with Himself? They cannot know Him, except as He is pleased to make Himself known to them, and in a way adapted to their capacities. He does this in a measure through the creation of the worlds. Out of the Infinite now appears the finite, out of the Invisible the visible. And supposing the worlds to exist and to be inhabited, does their existence prove to their inhabitants that they have a Creator? Do they, looking upon them, say, a God has made both us and our habitation? Let us suppose that His work in creation leads them from this to infer that He is a personal Creator, that they are dependent upon Him, and that He has moral attributes. Yet many problems remain unsolved. The creature may still

ask, Is the Creator the only God? Is He all-powerful and all-good? What are my relations to Him? Why am I here? What is my future? He asks, but gets no answer. He studies his material habitation; he studies himself. He finds mighty forces and laws. He cannot find God the Father. His problems remain unsolved.

But could not God give to His rational creatures such high spiritual capacities that, without any direct personal revelation or communication from Him, they might know, not only His existence as one God, the Creator, but also their own relations of dependence, and the duty of obedience? But this knowledge, however great, cannot determine the conduct of life. It cannot take the place of a personal, living, moral Governor. God is still a God afar off. The creature may feel and acknowledge that he ought to do His will, but what is that will? He may even historically know what God has done in the past, rewarding and punishing, but this does not tell him what he is to do day by day. There must be a direct and continual revelation of the Divine will for the guidance of life, and mere knowledge of His will does not give communion with Him as His loving children. It is only through His Son that we know the fatherhood of God, His sympathy and His love.

But, it may be asked again, Could not God make one being far superior to His other reason-

able creatures, and through him make known to all His will? This is possible; many have affirmed it. But it is plain that God cannot manifest Himself in all the variety of His relations to His creatures, and in the diversity of His actings, through any creature. How can any created being, archangel, or one yet higher, if possible, take the place of a Redeemer? Can he take upon himself the sins of the other creatures, and by his death destroy the law of sin and death? How can he show forth in his dealings with the fallen the mercy and love of the heavenly Father? How can they honour him as they must honour their Creator and Lord? How can they cry unto him, "Lord, have mercy upon us"? At best, however exalted, he is a creature like themselves, the workmanship of God's fingers. He cannot be the perfect Image of the Infinite, Eternal, and Holy One. The chasm between the Creator and the creature remains. It is not bridged over. No created being can appear before God and say, of the fallen creatures, "I in them, and Thou in me."

If the Infinite One cannot make Himself truly known to His rational creatures through any creation, whether of material worlds, or of rational beings, how shall He do this? The faith of the Church is that He does this through the Son's assumption of a created nature. Through this nature the Son makes the highest possible manifestation of God.

But not a few seem to forget this, and speak of the manifestation through the Son Incarnate as if only preparatory to a higher one in Heaven by the Father Himself. The work of the Son, it is said, is to lead to the Father. Having led us to Him, the Son's work as Revealer is ended. Exalted into Heaven, the creature looks upon his Creator face to face. In the brightness of His eternal glory, the glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ becomes dim. Through the finite we enter the realm of the Infinite, where we dwell as in our home. We seek a higher beatific vision than given us in the glorified Son—one of God in His essential glory.

Although few would admit, when it is thus stated, that our Lord could take such a subordinate place in the future, and that His work of revelation is chiefly that of leading to the Father that we may behold Him, yet many expressions in the writings of Christians point to this disparagement of Him. It is well, therefore, to keep clearly in mind that all manifestation of the Godhead to created beings is through the Son as Incarnate; and that all who in the coming ages shall see God, will see Him in the face of Jesus Christ. He alone makes the Invisible visible. A change of place from earth to Heaven does not so enlarge our powers as to enable us to bridge the chasm that separates the Infinite from the finite. This is done only by the Son taking

humanity, and in it manifesting the Divine. God in His essential glory is as invisible to us in Heaven as on earth.

Keeping this vital fact ever in mind, that we must see the Father in the Son, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, let us consider the Person of the Son as the Revealer.

Without attempting to define the relations of the several Persons of the Godhead to one another, we may take the expressions in the Nicene Creed the Son is "God of God" . . . "Begotten of the Father before all worlds" as teaching that He is God by derivation from the Father, not, indeed, that there was ever a time when the Sonship began to exist. It was an eternal relation,—an eternal Father and an eternal Son. Although co-eternal and co-equal, the Church has always taught that of the three Persons, the Son should take upon Himself the work of the Revealer, as most befitting His filial relationship. But as the Revealer, the Son takes what we may call a secondary place. He becomes a means to an end, or rather is both means and end: He is the Way leading to the Father, yet can He say, "Who hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He prays for His disciples that they may be with Him and behold His glory given Him by the Father. It is "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4: 6). Only as the Son, the visible Image, is glorified can the invisible Father be glorified.

As the Incarnate Son, Himself co-equal with the Father, He can represent Him, and act for Him in all the relations in which He may stand to His creatures. Whatever the Father may purpose to do, the Son Incarnate can execute, can speak for Him, can appear in theophanies, and by symbols. There is nothing in which He cannot show forth visibly all that is in the Father's heart—His love, His mercy, His anger, His righteous rewards and punishments. As the Son Incarnate, He is ever the same, and can ever be the Father's Representative. Through all ages, and to all creatures, He can make known His will, declare His purposes, teach His people, unite them in one, lead their worship, rule them in righteousness.

Since the capacity of the creature to receive a revelation must determine its nature and degree, we may say that this is the first point which, in the Divine mind, affects the order of God's manifestation of Himself. The words of the Lord, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," express an eternal truth, that God can speak to His creatures only as He has given them ears to hear. The higher the revelations He would make, the higher must be the capacity to apprehend them; and the higher this capacity, the closer the communion with God. The created nature which is best fitted to be the medium of Divine revelation, is that best fitted

to apprehend His truth and to enter into the fulness of His love.

But we meet with many who do not recognise this wide scope of the Incarnation as a revelation of the Father and the means of bringing us into closest communion with Him, nor think of it as lying at the basis of creation, but say that a revelation of God through the Word made flesh, the Son as Incarnate, was not in the Divine purpose when the world was created; it was made necessary through the sin of man. The Incarnation was, so to speak, an afterthought, a remedial measure. If man had not sinned, the Son would not have assumed any created nature. God would have made Himself objectively known to His creatures only through His material works, and moral government. Let us briefly consider this.

If we compare these two forms—revelation and redemption—of the Son's one work, for as the Redeemer He is also the Revealer, and distinguish them, we must regard the former as the chief. Redemption has relation only to the sinful, and is in its nature a transient work. When it is completed, the Son gives up the redemptive Kingdom to the Father, but continues to be the Revealer of God, His visible Image, to all creatures, and through the eternal ages.

Vitally important to us as was His death upon the cross for our salvation, showing to angels and

men how God abhors sin, yet His work as Redeemer was only one stage of His work, as the reign of sin and death is but an episode in the history of the human race. The ground of this tendency to subordinate the Incarnation to redemption—the greater to the less—is found in the immediate personal interest which we as sinful beings have in our Lord's sacrifice and atonement. The Cross thus early became the great centre of interest, and His Church lingered at His grave instead of rising and sitting with Him in the heavenly places. Many misinterpreted the words of St. Paul, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," as meaning that the Atonement was the one chief object of the Incarnation, and the great central truth of Christianity. But in fact no other apostle dwells so largely upon the glory of Christ's Person, and upon the wide scope of the Incarnation as embracing not only His work as Redeemer, but as the Revealer of God.

The question, then, before the act of Creation was, How shall the reasonable creatures whom God will make, best know Him? We know the way in which the essential chasm between God and the creature was bridged over, not closed. The Lord said of His relations to the Father and to His disciples, "Thou in Me, and I in them." The creature could not become God, but God could become a creature, and thus make the highest

manifestation of Himself. How this could be done, we do not attempt to explain, but accept the teaching of the Church that the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, in a way inexplicable to us, brought Himself within the limits of a creature nature, and was made man. Being the Son, of one substance with the Father, and a Person, He can be His Personal Representative and visible Image. The voice of the Son is the voice of the Father. "Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape" (John 5:37).

We thus reach the conclusion that the perfect form of the Divine manifestation is made through the Son, first as the Word, and then as Incarnate. In Him made man we have the completest revelation of Himself that God can give. To this all that He had done, both in His material works and in the constitution of reasonable moral beings, was preparatory. It is the Incarnation of His Son that sums up and explains all that had preceded it in time. All His works find their centre in and revolve around the Person of the Incarnate Son, "the brightness of His glory, and the express Image of His Person." "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

We may now note briefly the several stages of revelation. Before any act of creation, the

second Person of the Godhead, the Son, like the other Persons, was invisible, and became visible only through the assumption of a created nature. He must come forth from the Infinite and Eternal, and appear under the limitations of the finite and temporal; for only thus can He be known by His finite creatures. He stands before the Father's eye as The Word, prepared to carry out in all things the Divine purpose. This purpose involved successive, distinct stages. The work to be done by Him first of all was the creation of the material worlds; and then the creation of reasonable, moral beings. To these, though not as yet Incarnate, He stands in the relation of God's Revealer and Representative, through whom all knowledge of God must come, and who is the sole executor of His will. Assuming here that the first reasonable beings made were angels and men, He does not yet manifest Himself to them visibly as the Word made flesh. The fulness of time has not yet come. Yet we may well believe, as many have affirmed, that all the manifestations of God recorded in the Old Testament were manifestations of Him through the Word, being as yet pre-incarnate. There is no relation of God to His creatures, or manifestation of Himself to them, in which He may not represent the Father. We may, therefore, speak of all the appearances of the Father recorded in the Scriptures as those of the Son. In all cases, it is He

who appears, and speaks, and acts. When we read of God's appearing to Adam in Eden, and of His words there spoken, it is the Son taking upon Himself the manifestation of the Father, and declaring His will. It is He who appeared in the burning bush to Moses; who led His people by the cloud and the pillar of fire; who, attended by His angels, amid fire and smoke, with the trumpet blast, spake the Ten Commandments, and gave the Law to the trembling people; who dwelt in the most-holy between the Cherubim, and there communed with Moses.

The same also may be said of the Theophanies—God appearing in the likeness of man. Was it not the Son as the Word who, with His two angels, appeared to Abraham before the destruction of Sodom? who appeared to Moses and the Elders on the mount, when they saw the God of Israel; and to Isaiah, when he saw the Lord sitting upon the throne; and to Ezekiel, when he saw the likeness of a throne, and the likeness of a man above it? He who was to become man already appears in human form, foreshadowing the Incarnation. In the long history of Israel, it is the Son who, as the Representative of the Father, everywhere appears, and by whom He acts and speaks.

Mention may be here made of the Angel of the Covenant, or Angel of God, or of the Lord (Gen. 21: 17; 48: 16), whom many identify with the

Son. It is said that God, having chosen the people to be His own in a special sense, and established in a new relation, the Son also now takes a new relation to them (Ex. 14: 19; 33: 2, 14; Num. 20: 16), and becomes, so to speak, their guardian angel. This is in entire harmony with what we have seen of the place and work of the Son as the Father's Representative. But, if He was the Angel of the Covenant, He did not supersede the angels made to be His helpers. Many works were done by them, and doubtless under His direction.¹

But we need not dwell longer upon this. It will not be questioned by any accepting Christianity that through the Son Incarnate we may have such knowledge of the Father, and such access to Him, and communion with Him, as would not otherwise be possible. Our Lord says, "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him," and again, "No one cometh to the Father but by Me." The Son made man is the bond which binds together the Creator and the creature. In Him, God descends to man, and in Him man ascends to God. We can come into the Divine presence only as in the Son. It is one of the petitions in the Lord's intercessory prayer that His disciples "may all

¹ That the Angel of the Covenant was the Word, the second Person in the Trinity, was the view of most of the Greek Fathers, and is of many later theologians.

be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us." As the Son is in the Father, so all that are in the Son can enter into the full communion of the Father, and none other can. Whilst all men, as created by Him, are sons of God, and may find Him if they seek Him, yet sonship in its highest sense can be affirmed only of those in the Son, joint heirs with Him, who can enter with Him into the most holy place before the Father.

In taking upon Himself the place of God's Representative to all His creatures, the Son fills all its spheres from the beginning to the end. The last sphere of this representation is that of the Supreme Ruler and Judge. He has now under the Father universal authority and dominion as His King. "I have set my King upon My holy hill." "All authority hath been given unto Me in Heaven and upon earth." "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Through Him, the Father acts in all the administration of His Kingdom, and to Him, therefore, is due all obedience, honour, and glory.

Let us now, taking our stand upon the fact of the Incarnation, note the proof it gives of the love and goodness of God to His reasonable creatures. That He should make them in His own Image, if He created them at all, and thus enable them to know Him, and have communion with Him, and be blessed in Him, may be said to

be their creature right. (Of this more will be said later.) But how great should this knowledge and communion be?—for many degrees of it are possible. That His Son should take a created nature—an act in itself of infinite condescension—and thus manifest the Godhead in the highest possible degree, shows us in the strongest and clearest way how the Father seeks the well-being and happiness of His creatures. We do not speak here of the love shown by the Father in giving His Son to die upon the cross, but of the love shown by Him in the revelation made by the Son through taking a creature nature into eternal union with His own. It is this perfect revelation of Himself to all moral beings, and the blessings that follow it, that will be their eternal joy. And to this condition of knowledge and degree of communion, they could attain in no other way. Through the Incarnate Son alone, the way of approach to the Infinite Father is opened, and His creatures are brought into clearest knowledge of Him, and into closest communion with Him.

Considering the purpose of God to manifest Himself in the highest measure to His moral creatures, and thus to ensure their greatest happiness; and keeping in mind the teachings of our Lord Jesus, that He alone can make the Father known, may we not repeat that but for the purposed Incarnation, there would have been no Creation? No knowledge of the Godhead

which the Father could give His creatures in any other way, and no communion into which He could admit them, would fill the measure of His love. Incarnation and Creation stand inseparably together.

CHAPTER IV

THE CREATOR IN RELATION TO HIS RATIONAL CREATURES

OUR earth is a part of a great universe created by an all-powerful, wise, and good God. We ask, Why did He create? All Christian theologians in accordance with the Scriptures agree that it was from love. "God is love," and He would make rational beings that He may make Himself known to them, and bring them into the fellowship of His love. He would give them all His communicable perfections, and admit them into the closest possible communion with Himself; and they thus find in this communion the highest measure of creature blessedness. Such was the end that God set before Him in the creation of the worlds. He looked not at the mere material orbs, but at the rational moral beings who should inhabit them.

If this were the motive of God in creating reasonable and moral beings, and in endowing them with power to know and serve Him, the obvious inference is that He would so constitute

them as to admit them at once into communion with Himself. If the human race began with a single pair, we may believe that He would make Himself known to them from the first, and receive them into His fellowship. But a modern popular theory affirms that it was only after many centuries, or even ages, that man attained to such development of his mental and moral faculties that he could have any right knowledge of God, or of himself and his duties. There was a long period in which the fathers of our race were in a state midway between beasthood and manhood, having only the vaguest ideas of a Supreme Being, if, indeed, they had any, and with no conception of Him as a moral governor, or of themselves as morally responsible.

(Note.—To know the state of primeval man, we are told, look at the state of the lowest savages of to-day. It is said by Mr. F. Harrison, "As are the lowest of all savages, no doubt even lower, man once was." It is said by Sir John Lubbock that "the primitive condition of mankind was one of utter barbarism," and in his *Pre-Historic Times* he gives full account of the present condition, physical, moral, and intellectual, of the Hottentots, Bushmen, Patagonians, and others now living in the lowest stage of civilisation, regarding them as the representatives of primitive men. Of some of these, it is said that they have no belief in a Supreme Being, or in a future state of existence. Their food is of fruits, roots,

snakes, grubs; a whale washed ashore is eaten raw and putrid. Their persons are filthy beyond expression. Infanticide is common. Not a few are cannibals, not only enemies being killed and eaten, but slaves are fattened for the market. Among the very lowest, the parents, when they grow old, are killed by their children as a matter of duty.

But we need not go further into these details. And this, we are told, was the condition of our first parents. We may take the lowest savage of to-day as an improved specimen of the primeval man. In one point only is the present lower than the past. In the earliest period, men did not eat one another, the paucity of numbers did not permit this. Cannibalism is a development of later civilisation.)

Before we proceed to contrast this theory of man's religious history with that account which the Bible gives us, two preliminary points are to be considered. First: In the creation of a race of reasonable moral beings would it be most in accordance with the character of God, as a good and righteous Creator, so to constitute its progenitors that they enter at once into communion with Him; or in such a low state, intellectual and moral, that for many generations they cannot know or have fellowship with Him?

Secondly: Have His moral creatures any ethical rights?

We assume that the Creator is just and good, and that He creates from love. All admit that

to create a sinful being would be to disprove both His holiness and righteousness. Two things we may then confidently expect from a good and just Creator,—that He will give the rational creature whom He creates the capacity to know and to love, and to have communion with Him; and that He will place him in such position that this capacity may be exercised and developed, and his highest well-being be thus assured. If He created man with the purpose to bring him into communion with Himself, we cannot easily believe that when the human race appeared on earth, it was in the lowest stage of humanity, from which it could not emerge till many centuries had passed. Uncounted generations, we are told, must live before the race can come to any true knowledge of its Creator, or have any communion with Him.

I say that God might thus have made His reasonable creatures in the lowest stage of their development, alike ignorant of themselves and of the world around them, not even capable of knowing their own ignorance and weakness, and have obliged them to pass in successive generations through all forms of savagery and brutality before they could learn why they exist, and who has made them. I say God, as the all-Powerful, might have done this, but who does not feel that such a procedure towards the reasonable creatures that love has impelled Him to create, is wholly

inconsistent with what we know of His wisdom and goodness? If, indeed, it was beyond His power to create them able to know and love and serve Him, except through a very slowly developing process, beginning at the lowest mental and moral stage, and extending over ages, no more is to be said.¹ But we have no reason to believe this; God is not so limited. He does not, indeed, as the Scriptures tell us, begin with the absolutely perfect. A moral and reasonable being can never be perfect in the sense that no further development is possible. This his relation to God forbids. His capacities of love and knowledge must be ever enlarging through experience. But we cannot believe that a Perfect Being, who creates that He may make His creatures sharers in His blessedness, would place them so low in the scale of being that they neither know Him at the first, nor for many generations can they know and have communion with Him.

Let us imagine that an angel in Heaven, knowing that the Son is to take a created nature, and

¹ We are told by Sir O. Lodge that "the task of evolution from animal to higher man could not be undertaken and carried through, even by Deity, without grievous suffering, and agonising patience." It is the complaint of J. S. Mill that there is now so much of suffering in the world as to prove that God is not all-good, or not all-powerful. How greatly would this conclusion be strengthened, if we add past ages of suffering. Yet we are told with great assurance that this was the only way in which God could bring His reasonable creatures to know Him, and to love Him.

that this nature is to be the human, visits the earth in its early stages that he may see man who is to be so highly honoured. What would he see? Not Adam and Eve in the Garden, but some creatures dwelling in trees whose inarticulate cries he cannot understand. Returning to his heavenly home, he learns that these are the progenitors of the human race, not yet human, but in time to become so.¹

Some centuries later the angel visits the earth again. He now finds that man's progenitors have left the tree-tops and are walking erect upon the ground. They have the human form, but scarcely more than animal instincts. They dwell in caves, and with stones and clubs fight the wild beasts, and clothe themselves in their skins. They do not shrink in their half-starved condition from devouring raw flesh, and drinking the warm

¹ A recent writer, Prof. Shaler (*Aspects of the Earth*), thus speaks of the origin of man: "Modern science teaches that man himself, at least so far as his organic body is concerned, is derived from a long line of creatures who dwelt in trees.

. . . It is also possible that the forest habit has left its impress on man's mind as well as his body, for as appears from a consideration of the existing tree-dwelling species of mammals, they are generally more social, sympathetic, and quick-witted animals than most of those who dwell upon the surface of the earth." The Professor tells us that when the brute passed by "some as yet unexplained gradations into the primitive man," the boughs were abandoned. But we are told that "a very large part of the four-footed kindred" still continue to occupy them, and the inference is that they will gradually become human.

blood. This is the condition of the primeval man; the ape has developed into the savage.

Again the angel visits the earth: man is now showing his mental superiority to the beasts below him. His curiosity is awakened by the objects around him, and he begins carefully to note them, their qualities and relations. He gains some control over material forces, as over water and fire, and uses them for his needs, and for stones and clubs he uses the spear and bow. But of himself, his origin, his destiny, he knows nothing. He has no conception of a Creator, or of any moral government.

Again the angel visits the earth. The human race has greatly multiplied, and he finds families, tribes, cities, and established government. Man has taken great strides forward. His knowledge of material forces is vastly enlarged, and made use of. And the idea of Powers in nature superior to himself, and on which he is dependent, is dawning upon him. He sees in the wind and storm, the sun and the moon, superior beings, and begins to worship them. He is entering into the sphere of polytheism, of local deities; and some conceptions of a life after death, leading to the worship of his ancestors, are taking hold of him. But of a God, his Creator and Lord, he has no conception, much less of His moral attributes. The idea of one Supreme and Holy Being, who makes known His will and demands

obedience, is still far in the future. Barbarism gives place to a rude civilisation, but fetishism continues side by side with a continually degenerating polytheism. The lowest animals and even insects are made the objects of worship. Polytheism, or nature worship, necessarily tends to moral corruption, and ends in scepticism and atheism,¹ as with the Greeks and Romans.

But we need not go further into details. Monotheism, as we are told by those who hold this slow development of man, could not be really known by any till the unity of the material worlds was known. It was not till Science could span the universe, and know its unity through universal law, that men could really believe in one God. This scientific monotheism dates back only one or two centuries. The Jews, indeed, came to believe in one God some centuries before Christ,

¹ If the orbs filling space are inhabited by moral beings, standing in like relation to God as men, it is reasonable to believe that all will have the same history. If evolution from the beast is true of men, it will also be true of them. Their history will begin with the lowest type of rationality. Of course, over such beings dwelling on the border line between the beast and the man, there cannot be any moral government for long periods. Not till the moral sense is sufficiently developed, can they understand the principles of morality, and be amenable to moral law. What a spectacle of moral confusion do these worlds inhabited for ages by those struggling up from beasthood to manhood thus present. And as we are told by some astronomers that there are multitudes of dead worlds, we ask, were they peopled? and if so, what has become of their inhabitants?

and the Christian Church affirms it, but for all the ages of human history preceding, man knew only of national and local gods, and these often of the lowest moral character. A pure and holy worship was impossible. And always, we are told, the science of any age must determine its religion. When Science assures us that there is one God, the Creator, we may put it into our creeds.

If God, as it is said, created men in the condition of "utter barbarism," they were necessarily barbarians, and how can they be held responsible for their barbarities? They knew nothing of God, of His moral attributes and government, and could not have been morally responsible for any acts of cruelty and savagery. Can we think of a just God as demanding obedience to laws of which they knew nothing, and as punishing them for conduct which they knew not to be sinful? We cannot so think of Him. We may take in way of illustration a state which has a class of subjects too low and ignorant to know who their ruler is, and what are his laws, and yet are punished if they do not keep them. All would call this rank injustice, and would it not be so in the case of the Supreme Being?

If primeval men were not morally responsible, the question arises, Would they perish as the beasts perish, or live after death? As we cannot think of them as meriting punishment, we cannot as meriting reward. What shall we say of their

future? We may not exalt them into Heaven, we may not cast them down into Hell.

We may ask again, When in the development of man was the line of moral responsibility passed? When did God begin to regard him and treat him as a moral being? Where find the line that separates beasthood and humanity?

Thus far we have viewed the matter from the Divine side, asking what it befits a Perfect Being to do. But we may now look at it from the creature side. Has the rational creature any what we may call, ethical creature-rights? It is admitted by all that for God to make a sinful being would be both inconsistent with His Divine perfections, and unjust to the creature. But why is it not, as to its principle, equally so, that He should make him so low down in the scale of being that for generations he must lead a life where the moral and intellectual elements are so little developed that it is impossible for him to have more than the vaguest and most distorted idea of a Supreme Being? He does not know why he himself exists, or that he has a Creator, or that he is under moral government. He knows neither his past nor his future. He is wholly incapable of any holy and blessed communion with his Maker. The superstitions and idolatries of his primal state may not be sinful, or deserving of punishment, nor his cruelties and barbarities; but may he not ask in the name of the race, when

he emerges from his long night of intellectual and moral darkness, Why has the good God thus dealt with us? Why has He hidden Himself for so many generations from us, and left us to struggle with all forms of ignorance and error, and to fall into innumerable superstitions and degrading idolatries?

Thus upon both grounds,—the righteousness and goodness of God as Creator, and the ethical rights of His creatures,—we may believe that He will from the first teach them concerning Himself, and their relations to Him. He will make known to them His laws, their own moral responsibility, and their duties to Him, and the consequences of disobedience. And the creature will feel that his ethical rights as a moral and responsible being have been regarded and acknowledged. Created in the Image of God, with the capacity to know and love Him, he is taken at once into communion with Him. Imperfect as is his knowledge of God and of himself at first, so long as he abides in this communion it is ever increasing. Conscious of his moral responsibility, he makes more and more the Divine commands the rule of his conduct, and he is blessed if he continue in the goodness of his creation state.

It is well to note here that, if this process upward from utter barbarism is true of man, we may believe it to be true, also, of all rational and moral beings; of angels as well as men; and of

all the inhabitants of the stellar orbs, if they be inhabited, or shall be in the ages to come. The history of man cannot be exceptional, but must be the history of all. If so, in what an unhappy condition are all intelligent and moral beings when created! Beginning at the lowest possible level of rationality, or even below it, through long ages they gradually develop their faculties, and finally come into such an intellectual and moral condition that they can have some right conception of a God, and of their relations to Him, and only then can their moral responsibility begin. Can we believe this? If this were so, and this process of slow development from the bestial upward were the law of all reasonable creature-being, in what an unloving aspect would the Creator in Heaven appear to us, and what moral darkness would shroud all habitable worlds! What heart-rending cries and wails would ascend into the heavenly skies from every orb where this evolutionary process is going on!

Let us turn from the constitution of man himself to that of his dwelling-place, and put in contrast the two accounts of the condition of the earth when man appeared upon it, the Evolutionary and the Biblical, and judge which is most in accordance with the character of a Perfect Being.

Evolutionary.—"The greater part of its [the earth's] area was covered with primeval forests, vast swamps,

dense jungles, moors, prairies, and arid desert. . . . Where in this terrible world was man? . . . He sustained a precarious existence, not yet Lord of the Creation, inferior to many quadrupeds in strength, and only just superior to them in mind,—nothing but the first of the brutes. . . . A few cries, assisted by gestures, a social association of the sexes, a dim trace of parentage or brotherhood were all that was. The life of savage man was one of unutterable and brutal loneliness.”

Biblical.—“ And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed.

And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. . . . And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”¹

Can we believe that God would put His children for many generations in a habitation where, during the long process of its formation, all terrible elements of destruction are in intense ac-

¹ It is no part of the purpose of this writing to discuss the evolutionary theory as a mode of creation, but there are some who speak of the account in the Bible of our first parents' formation by God as if no one could now accept it. So far is this from being true, the biblical account is the only one of man's origin which is consistent with the Divine perfections, and with man's ethical rights.

tivity—volcanoes, earthquakes, tempests, floods, which man has no power to resist, or to escape? We cannot believe that an earthly father would place his child in some desert wild, exposed to storms and savage beasts, or in a hospital full of all forms of deadly disease. Far otherwise does God deal with His children, made in His Image. Man came on the last day of Creation, when the chaos had become the cosmos, and the mighty creative forces, though not inactive, were subdued to an orderly activity not inconsistent with a happy and quiet human residence. But God does more than place man upon the earth to find a habitation for himself. He prepares a special habitation—a garden,—showing in this His goodness and care for the happiness of His creature. But He does more than this: He enters at once into visible communion with him, appearing attended by the Cherubim. He gives him certain commands, teaching him what he may do, and what he may not do, and the penalty of disobedience. Thus Adam felt himself, from the very first, in the Presence, and under the eye, of a Higher Being.

The biblical statement is thus fully consistent with what we should expect from a loving God in His dealings with those He had made in His own Image. He does not hold Himself aloof from our first parents. He does not leave them in ignorance of His existence, wandering through

a pathless wilderness, and groping after Him. He is there, in the Person of the Son, with them in the garden. They may hide from Him, but He does not hide from them. He will bring them into closer and closer communion with Himself, if they will render Him obedience, and abide in His love. There must be human development, but it has its starting-point in God's manifestation of Himself to men.¹

¹ It is difficult to see what the Christian evolutionist who believes in a personal Creator gains by affirming a long and slow process of the evolution of reasonable beings. There is more intrinsic difficulty in conceiving an instantaneous than a gradual creation, but the power is the same in both. It is only a question of method. It is indeed easier to believe in a gradual development, the several steps of which we can see and know, than in absolute beginnings. That God made the earth by successive creative acts, the Bible tells us, the higher based upon the lower, and man the highest and last. Let it be granted that in regard to his body, man has much in common with the animals below him, that the anatomical differences are small, but his relations to the Creator are not those of the lower organisms. Here the differences are mental and moral, and are immeasurable. For him all living creatures below him are made. He is to rule over them, but not to have communion with them; he is made for God, and the initial step of his development, both moral and intellectual, is the knowledge of his Creator, and all his greatness and happiness lies in his communion with Him. It is, therefore, through God's manifestations of Himself to him, and not through the influences of his material environment, that he is to be educated, and brought to the highest measure of his capacities. He does not learn to know God through nature, but nature through God. In His light only can we see light. His material creations are mirrors that reflect His Divine attributes.

CHAPTER V

HUMANITY: ITS ELEMENTS AND ITS PLACE IN THE DIVINE ECONOMY

THE essential element in the idea of the Incarnation, disregarding the etymology of the term, is the assumption by the Son of God of a creature nature as a means of Divine manifestation and action: it may be the nature of man, or of some other. This is determined by God, and was determined, as we have seen, anterior to its creation. This nature will have those properties and qualities which best fit it for His purpose as a means of manifesting Himself to His creatures. As we know that the nature assumed was that of man, we know that this best serves God's purpose, and may therefore be called the highest possible.

Although human nature in all its essential elements was, before its actual creation, determined upon by God as the nature to be taken by the Son, and therefore had an ideal existence before any other, yet the actual creation of man was not the first in the order of time. The priority belongs to the angels, as appears from

the account of Adam's temptation. But as we are specially concerned here with the Incarnation, it will be more convenient to consider, first, the human nature, and the place man holds in the Divine economy. As the Son was to take upon Him the nature of man, the physical constitution of man was, if we may so speak, of great moment in the Divine counsels, for it determined the physical constitution of the universe, and this to its minutest details. For the God-man all things were made, and we know nothing aright except we know it in its relations to Him. Let us note this in some particulars, and, first, man's material constitution.

The constitution of man, as we are taught by the Apostle Paul, embraced body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5: 23). Why these three elements? We cannot doubt that it was because humanity so constituted could best serve the Divine purpose in the manifestation of the Godhead, and also because its threefoldness opened to man a wider sphere for his energies and enjoyments. It may appear, when we better understand the depths of creative wisdom, that because of the Trinity in the Godhead, there is a certain trinity of being running through all the works of God, giving them their perfectness.

Of these three constituents of humanity one is the body. This is made of matter. But the question arises, What is matter? We are here

concerned with its relation to the Incarnation, not with its special properties as known to the chemist.

What is matter? A few years ago this question was readily answered, but to-day few attempt to give any precise definition. The sciences especially dealing with it are constantly making discoveries as to its properties, which show that much of their supposed knowledge had little basis in fact and must be constantly revised. We are taught through these continuous discoveries that the material universe, as God made it, has many forces and properties as yet unknown to us, some of which, we may believe, will not be known till the time appointed by Divine wisdom. When this time comes, God's words, and especially those respecting the future of man and of his habitation,—the resurrection of the body, and the changes in the earth when all will be made new,—words so hard for us now to understand or believe, will be made plain through the manifestation and action of forces prepared from the beginning for this purpose, but hidden till His time has come. Existing concealed in the natural stage, they will be manifest in the supernatural. This point will meet us again in considering the New Creation.

It was because matter, whatever it may be, as appointed of God to be an element of man's constitution, was to be taken by the Son, that it is

what it is in all its properties, and that it is made the physical substratum of the universe. Its properties are those which the Father gave it as best fulfilling His purpose in Creation, especially in its relation to life in all its manifold forces. We know of no creature life except as embodied in matter; and as in the Incarnate Son is the highest form of life, so matter in His body finds its highest place and value, and attains its fullest activity. It is not, then, to be wondered at that it enters into the constitution of all intelligent and moral beings. The Son's body as seen by the Divine eye prior to its creation was the norm after which the body of Adam was made, and thus determined the use of matter in the earth in all its material creations, and throughout the universe.

The adaptation of matter to be the instrument of spirit was not of accident or of chance, but of Divine wisdom, giving to it the requisite powers and qualities in foresight of the Incarnation of the Son; and the union and harmony of spirit and matter are essential to the perfection of man. There is no reason to believe that the material element will cease to be a part of his constitution any more than that matter will cease to be a constituent element of the universe. As now glorified in the Person of the Son, it will have its place in the eternal manifestation of God.

In giving to man matter as a permanent element

of his bodily constitution, and of his dwelling-place, we are to remember that it may have different conditions as determined by his moral state—natural, unnatural, supernatural. Of these more will be said later. As taken by the Son for our redemption, His body was “the body of our humiliation,” subject to weakness, pain, and death, but capable of becoming “the body of His glory” (Phil. 3: 21). Of this higher material condition, a specimen was seen on the Mount of Transfiguration, when His face did shine as the sun; and in this glory will He appear when He comes to establish His Kingdom, and to be the King and Judge. And of this glory shall His risen saints be partakers. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13: 43). Some of the Reformers compared the nature of man united to the Person of the Son, to a glass globe around our sun, shining with a heavenly brightness given it by His glory, and illumining with its splendour all the worlds. As said by St. Paul, His holy ones even now reflect “as a mirror, the glory of the Lord, [and] are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3: 18). And again, he speaks of our “light affliction which worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4: 17). As the outward is only a manifestation of the inward, the image of the glorified Lord is first perfected in our

spirits through the Holy Spirit, and then in our immortal bodies.

Those who think of matter as something gross, and ill-mated with spirit, and a clog upon it, and therefore as something transient, and which through death we are happily rid of, do well to remember that its constitution with all its qualities was determined upon before it was created, when it was resolved in the Divine counsels that the Son should take to Himself a created nature, of which matter was to be an essential and permanent element. There is no reason to believe that any created being exists that has not a material embodiment, and a local habitation.

Having said that all things were made by the Word, and for Him, the Apostle adds, "In Him was life." The term "life" cannot be defined, yet we continually recognise it as present or absent in the two modes of being, the living and the non-living. From the Word, as from a fountain, flows forth life—not any one form only, but all forms, each with its peculiar properties, from the lowest to the highest. The life of God cannot, indeed, be given to the creature; it is eternal, incomprehensible, incommunicable. The highest type of creature life is that of man, and the Apostle adds, "And the life was the light of men." Another form of life is that of the angels. According to the measure of the life will be the spiritual vision, the power of seeing God, and of

communion with Him. And this life, with its light, is given through the Son to every man coming into the world. It is elsewhere spoken of by the Lord: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matt. 6: 23).

Of the two forms of human life, the natural and the supernatural, or that of Adam and of the risen Christ, mention will be made later.

As we can know the full meaning and power of life only as seen in the Incarnate Son, so also the meaning of death can be rightly understood only as seen in its relations to Him. As the separation of the two constituent elements, body and soul, because of sin, death holds a most important place in the economy of redemption. Humanity as seen in Adam was tried, and it fell and came under the law of sin and death. As no longer good, but corrupt and evil, it must be put away. It could not serve the purpose of God. There must be a new and better form of life, but not a new creation; the old must be made new. This was effected through death, the separation of soul and body. Here was the significance of the Lord's death. The fallen nature inherited from His mother was put away as something unworthy, and incapable of answering God's purpose, and a higher type of life took its place. The Lord died, but was "quickened in the spirit." He took again His body, essentially the same, but now

so united to the quickened spirit as no more to be separated from it, but to be made partaker of its quickening power. Thus out of death came life. He took flesh and blood that "through death He might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2: 14). The great enemy was defeated in the stronghold of his power.

Thus we see how death, in itself "the wages of sin" and abhorrent to God, is made through His grace the means of the attainment of a higher life. It is not that the separated soul enters at once into this higher life, but that the body of corruption is laid aside. The state of separation is, therefore, preparatory to the higher state of the resurrection. Death is the gateway to life in that we put away the old body that we may take the new. The departed, quickened in spirit, rest in hope of the resurrection; the living, partakers of Christ's life, wait for the translation. (Rom. 8: 23; 1 Thess. 4: 17.)

We now turn to the relation of man to the earth as his habitation.

Man, having in the foreordination of God a material body, must have a material dwelling-place. The Bible teaches us that there were distinct preparatory stages in the earth's formation, and it was not until these were completed that man appeared upon it. Of the time thus occupied, nothing is said except in the mention

of days, as indefinite periods, but we see a progress upward from lower to higher, and we learn that this will continue till it culminates in a new earth. We thus find a close connection between the material construction of the earth and the physical constitution of man, the latter determining the former. The two are adapted to each other; an illustration of which we see in the eye and light.

But man has more than a material body, he has also mind, and this was to find development through his study of nature. He finds in his examination of the constitution and relation of the various material objects around him, proofs of the existence of a creative mind, and learns ever new lessons of the Creator's power and goodness. Through his studies of nature, his mental capacities are enlarged, he discovers almost daily new properties of matter, new laws and forces; and with increasing knowledge comes increasing power to control and use them. The earth was so constituted in the beginning as to furnish in the several stages of man's history, through the possibilities of change inherent in matter, a great means of mental and spiritual education. All forms of good and evil have their visible symbols—light and darkness, health and disease, beauty and deformity, rest and toil, life and death. The spiritual is seen in the sensible, the invisible in the visible, the future in the present. As has

been truly said, the earth "was so framed as to be a storehouse of indications and figurative intimations of future higher things."¹ It is an open book, which gives to the intellect vast stores of knowledge, and reveals to the spiritual eye many mysteries—the deep things of God. The Lord's parables teach what prophetic meaning may lie hidden in the most common things.

Thus the earth as made for man, primarily for the God-man to be the place of His birth, and home during His earthly ministry, and the seat of His Kingdom, had far higher ends in the Divine intent than to minister to our bodily wants. Here man was to be educated, all his powers, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, were to be developed and were to find full scope for their activity. Consider only his imaginative powers in the field of language and literature. What would language be without its metaphors? What would the earth's literature be if the similes and illustrations drawn from the ever-changing skies over us, from the moon and stars, from the revolving seasons, from the oceans and rivers, from the storms and winds, from the forests and flowers, from the glories of morning and evening were all to be stricken out? Yet it might have

¹ A remarkable instance of this is seen in the creative words, "Let there be lights, and let them be for signs, and for seasons" (Genesis 1:14). As showing forth the mind of God, or as moral indications, they have a more than physical value. (Mark 13:24; Matt. 25:29, and often in the Old Testament.)

been so. The earth might have given us the means of bodily subsistence, without any such profusion of material riches and beauty. Human life on an earth unlike our own in many points is doubtless possible, but how monotonous and barren would be our life if all this outward stimulus of our faculties, and these manifold sources of delight, were taken from us.

In preparing the earth for man's abode, it was prepared to meet not only the earlier but the later phases of his history. Not only has there been an adaptation of its physical state in general to man, but so far as geographical arrangement and local position affect the place and development of races and nations, these have been Divinely ordained with reference to God's purpose in its inhabitants. In this provision for the future, He does only what any wise builder of a dwelling-house does,—looks forward to coming generations and their needs. As Adam had his special abode in Eden given him, so we may believe in regard to his posterity that it was not chance that determined the course of the two great rivers Euphrates and Tigris, and the formation of the fertile plain of Babylon. The same may be said of Egypt and the Nile. Still more is it obvious that Palestine in the Divine purpose was made what it is in its great physical features for His Covenant people—the sea on the one side, the desert sands on another; eastward its


deep chasm and swift-rushing Jordan; northward, the lofty peaks of Lebanon; its Tabor and Hermon, its Zion and Moriah, its Dead Sea and Sea of Galilee—not only that there His people might dwell safely and alone, but that they might also be educated by the various forms of nature around them, giving such varied wealth of illustration to the poets and prophets. And doubtless the present arrangement of the earth's great physical features—of its continents, of its oceans and islands, of its mountains and rivers—serves not only to furnish national boundaries, but to furnish also a fit theatre for His present and future work in the history of our race. It is not by chance that the nations of Christendom occupy their present geographical positions. He has set the bounds of their habitations (Acts 17: 26). No one can tell, for example, how much the position of the Mediterranean Sea has affected the history of nations, and may affect it in time to come.

As made to be the orb where the Word should be made flesh, and live His earthly life, and as man's permanent abode, the earth holds a unique moral place among all the starry orbs. Has it also a unique physical place? Does astronomy give us any intimation of this? This question will be best considered when we speak of other worlds and their habitability.

That the earth as man's habitation should be so small in comparison with other orbs, is in per-

fect keeping with what the Bible tells us of the Divine purpose in our humanity. Here the trial of man was to be made, and for this end great multitudes were not needed. The earth should be of such extent that its inhabitants might know and realise their unity—that they have a common parentage, common interests, a common history, and a common destiny. Only in this one way could the one gospel be preached unto all, and there be a Catholic or Universal Church. Upon this unity, possible only in a small orb, the Bible lays great stress, especially as to be realised in the Kingdom of the Son when into His city the nations bring their homage and glory. All peoples are to know and to feel that they are one, that there is a universal brotherhood, and so universal peace.

Taught by astronomy that there are millions of stellar orbs, and many of them vastly larger than the earth, we find ourselves lost in the immensity of creation, and cannot believe that we can be such objects of God's watchful care that not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge. But a little reflection shows us that we need not be so overpowered by these countless material worlds as to lose the consciousness of our standing as His children. We are not shining bubbles swept along on the endless tide of the ages, seen for a moment and then vanishing for ever. Man, small and weak as he is, is of greater



value in the eyes of the Creator than all the worlds He has made. Let us imagine an infant lying in his cradle at the foot of Niagara, with its "mighty waters rolling for evermore." How feeble, how helpless! His plaintive cry is not heard in the cataract's roar, a tiny wave would sweep him to destruction. Yet in God's eye that infant is more than the earth-shaking cataract, for he is His child, made in His own Image. He will live in his Father's house, radiant in immortal beauty, and his voice will be heard singing his Creator's praise when the rocks around him shall have been ground into dust, and silence rests on the dry and desolate ravine where now the resistless torrents run.

CHAPTER VI

ANGELS AND HEAVEN

HAVING spoken of man and the earth in their relations to the Incarnation, we proceed to speak of the angels and Heaven.

Angels may be said to have the same mental and moral constitution as men, and like them are made in the Image of God, and so able to know and love and serve Him. But as the characteristics of men are determined by the place they hold in the Divine purpose, so is it with the angels. Their special place is that of helpers to the Son in His works of creation and redemption, and they are endowed with powers fitting them for this end. Whilst, therefore, having a rank below that of men in that the Son was to take human nature, in other points they are superior, and so able to be helpers and co-workers with the Son. This will appear more clearly if we consider the differences of the human and angelic natures. The first of these is as to physical constitution. Have they material bodies? They are called (Heb. 1: 14) "spirits." But spirit is a vague term, and has several meanings. "God is

a Spirit" uncreate, and the only pure Spirit. It is also distinctively applied to the third Person of the Trinity, "the Holy Spirit." The Apostle, St. Paul (1 Thess. 5: 23), speaks of the threefold constitution of man, "spirit, soul, and body," and this human spirit is often spoken of as having a substantial existence when separated from the body. The martyr St. Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7: 59).

The epithet "spiritual" is even more vague. It is often used as equivalent to immaterial. When the Apostle speaks of a "spiritual body," it is often said that we are to understand one in which is no material element, in contrast with a "natural body" which is material, overlooking that there is a "body" in both cases, which the epithets "natural" (psychical) and "spiritual" (pneumatical) define and distinguish (1 Cor. 15: 44). We also speak of a spiritual philosophy as opposed to a materialistic, and of a spiritual form of character, which may be evil as well as good. But embodiment—a body—is essential to every created being, even if invisible to us, for without it there would be no limitation in space. God only is omnipresent. We must, therefore, believe that angels are embodied beings.

In our ignorance of the qualities of matter, and its possible combinations, we cannot assert that there is any form of embodiment that is not material. It is the place given to matter in the

body of the Incarnate Son, as already said, that defined its qualities, and gave it a permanent place in the physical constitution of men and angels. If our Lord took to Himself a material body as an essential part of His humanity, and still retains it ("In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"—Col. 2: 9), there seems to be no ground for denying to the angels material bodies: otherwise, He would be inferior to them in this regard. There may be differences in the qualities and powers of such bodies corresponding to the ends they are intended to serve in the Divine purpose, and in their degree of excellence. All recognise this in the distinction made between "the body of humiliation" and "the body of glory," and between the present earth and the earth made new.

If, then, we may believe that angels are like men as to the possession of material bodies, yet there are still important points of difference. Ordinarily they are invisible to human eyes, but they have the power, either as native to them or specially given them, to appear in the human form, and employ human speech. From the words of the Lord, it is inferred that they are not subject to death, nor is there any distinction of sex (Luke 20: 35, 36). From this it would follow that they, unlike men, have no common ancestor, but were individually created. Several gradations of rank and office are mentioned: "Arch-

angels," "Thrones," "Principalities," "Powers," "Dominions"; but these we need not attempt to define. To them we may add the "Cherubim" and "Seraphim"; whether these are distinct from the orders mentioned, or included in them, is uncertain. Their number is great. In Deuteronomy (33: 2) mention is made of "the ten thousands of holy ones." In the Psalms, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels" (68: 17; Dan. 7: 10). Our Lord speaks of "twelve legions of angels," and at the Lord's birth there was "a multitude of the heavenly host" (Matt. 26: 53; Luke 2: 13).

What knowledge in general the angels may have had of the Divine purpose in the Son, we cannot say, but that it was large appears from the Lord's word respecting the time of His return, as not known to Himself or to the angels (Matt. 24: 36). But this knowledge does not embrace all the Divine purpose. St. Peter speaks of things which "the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1: 12). Yet are they the helpers of God in many most important transactions. It is said that the Law was given by "the disposition of angels," or "ordained through angels, by the hand of a mediator" (Acts 7: 53; Gal. 3: 19). Angels announced the Incarnation, and prepared the way.

We now turn to the relation in which the angels stand to God. The Son said of the angels

that "they always behold the face of My Father in Heaven."¹ There is no reason to believe that any created being can behold God except through some sensible manifestation on His part, and His appointed instrument of manifestation is the Incarnate Son. He is doubtless to angels, as to men, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. They saw in Him from their creation the Image and Representative of the Father, and gave Him due homage.

From the relation in which angels stand to God, we may turn to the more special relation in which they stand to the Incarnate Son. Taking upon Himself the place of the Word and the duties of the Creator and Administrator of the Divine government, He will have those who will assist Him in His works. Such assistance does not imply on His part any want of actual power to do them, but of all His reasonable creatures, God requires service, and this according to their endowments and positions, and in rendering this service, angels, like men, find their own spiritual development.

¹ The expression "the face of God" (Matt. 18: 10) is said by Oehler to be used in distinction from His infinite and transcendent nature, as meaning "His coming down into the sphere of the created, whereby He can be brought within the immediate knowledge of man." This coming into the sphere of the created is through the Son, foreordained to become man. It is the face of the Father revealed in the Son which the angels behold.

It is necessary here to keep clearly in mind that the human nature to be taken by the Son was to be the norm by which all His creative acts were to be ruled. All things were made for Him as Incarnate, the God-man. The angelic nature was, therefore, though prior in the order of creation, to be made conformable to the human. Had He as the God-man a material body, so they; and a material dwelling-place, so they. As He was the Servant of the Father, so they were His servants. As He was the Saviour, they were His ministers to those "who should be heirs of salvation." For His service, they were adapted in their constitution, physical, mental, moral. Their knowledge and control over the forces of nature were such as would enable them to fulfil all the varieties of service He sought from them, whether as His messengers, or as guardian angels of individuals and of nations, or as executors of His judgments upon His enemies.

It is not necessary to mention in detail the services rendered by the angels to the Son, both before and after the Incarnation. The question will suggest itself: If the angels were created before man, and created to be the helpers of the Son in His future work, may they not have taken part in the formation of the earth? If from their knowledge of the purpose of God in His Son, they knew that He would take to Himself a creature nature, they must have felt intense interest in

regard to that nature, and this would extend to the habitation where its possessor would dwell. We may therefore understand the words in Job (38: 4, 7) as referring to their help: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth, . . . when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" It is said by Professor Briggs (*Incarnation of the Lord*): "The angels are certainly associated with God in the creation of the world." And their assistance may not have been confined to the earth, but may have extended to other parts of the creation. How angels can act upon material things external to themselves, we do not know, but we have an illustration in the deliverance of Peter by the angel. Apparently without being touched by him, the chains fell from off his hands, and the iron gate opened to them of its own accord (Acts 12: 7).

As it appears from the account in Genesis of the temptation of Adam that the angels were created before man, their sin and fall already having taken place, we may believe that their special habitation was prepared for them before the earth was prepared for man. The place prepared for them was Heaven. This word has several meanings. It is said by Cremer (*Lex.*): "St. Paul distinguishes the heavens: heaven in the physical sense, it arches over and encompasses the earth; heaven in its general religious

sense, as contrasted with the earth and earthly things; and again, as the central, gracious, and beatific Presence of God in Paradise." It is in the last sense that we speak of Heaven as the abode of angels. Heaven, as a locality, doubtless came into existence with the material orbs. While as yet God alone existed, we cannot well think of a place where He specially dwelt and manifested His Divine glory—a glory which there was no creature to behold. It was not till the Son took upon Him to be the Revealer of the Father, and those were made to whom He could reveal Him, that there could be a Heaven as an abode, a holy place where those could dwell to whom He should manifest Himself. As the eternal Son in the bosom of the Father, no creature had seen Him or could see Him. He must first come under the limitations of a creature-nature, and dwell in a created and local habitation. Having finished His work on earth, He ascended in the body into Heaven. "In my Father's house, there are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14: 2). The place to which He went was the Heaven, already existing, the abode of the angels; but the place He prepares for His Church is the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, coming down from Heaven out of God, having the glory of God. This is not the Heaven made for the angels and their abode, but is prepared for the members of

His body when glorified. There are many mansions, all blessed abodes, but with degrees of glory. The highest and holiest, the New Jerusalem, cannot be revealed till the Saviour's work in the Church is finished, and the Bride is exalted to sit with Him in His throne.

The relation of angels to men, as we have seen, is determined by their relations to the God-man their Creator. As humanity is the nature made to be taken into the Godhead, it stands at the head of all creature natures. The Son took not upon Himself the angelic nature, but the seed of Abraham (Heb. 2: 16). It is therefore easy to understand why the Apostle St. Paul should so definitely express this superiority of humanity: "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6: 3). The same truth is expressed (Heb. 1: 14): "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (R. V.) As they ministered to the Son in the days of His humiliation, so they now minister to those on earth who are made partakers of His salvation, but not yet of His glory. The office to which these are called and which they enter upon in the resurrection, is that of kings and priests unto God, an official relation never ascribed unto the angels. As in the administration of a great Kingdom there are many officers and ranks, so will it be in the Kingdom of the Son, and the angels will then have their place

and work, and that place doubtless very near the King, but not to sit with Him in His throne.

But the question may be asked, Does not the fact that man is a composite being, having the two elements, body and soul, separable, and so liable to death, show an inferiority to the angels? They cannot die, and their immortality, it is said, is a proof that the angelic condition is higher than the human. On the contrary, reflection will show us that it is in this very point their inferiority appears. In the possibility of death, lies the possibility of redemption. We have reason to believe, as already said, that the angels came into being as immediate individual creations. Their disobedience, their sinfulness, is individual. There is no organic unity, no headship like that of Adam, so that in the trespass of one the many fall, and therefore no such work of salvation as wrought by the work of Christ. Their salvation must be individual, but we do not know that any of the fallen angels have ever repented and returned to their allegiance (2 Peter 2: 4). But man through death may be delivered from the law of sin and death, and made a partaker through resurrection of eternal life. In giving man a composite nature, God, who knew the future of humanity, prepared the way for its exaltation, when its redemption should have been effected by the act of the Son, coming Himself in mortal flesh, and dying on the cross, and rising from the

sepulchre to die no more. Thus angels are immortal in virtue of their creation, men through life immortal given them in the Son.

Of the fall of the angels, and of their work in the future, something will be said later.

CHAPTER VII

OTHER WORLDS AND THEIR INHABITANTS

SO far as we know from the Scriptures, or from the investigations of science, there are but two orders of moral beings in the universe, angels and men. As this will probably be questioned, it will be necessary to consider it.

Two questions meet us: first, the habitability of other worlds as determined by physical conditions; secondly, the habitability of other worlds as determined by the relation of their inhabitants to the Incarnate Son.

First.—Are there other worlds habitable? Modern astronomers find in the universe two systems, the Stellar and the Solar. It is said by Professor Newcomb that “these offer us two distinct fields of inquiry.” Let us briefly consider their special features, and their relations to one another, as bearing on the point before us.

The Solar system—our own—is sufficiently known to all: a central sun surrounded by planets, revolving in definite orbits, to which it gives heat and light. Its attraction holds them in their orbits, and determines the rapidity of

their movements. Of these eight planets, only one—our earth,—so far as we know, is inhabited.

Of the manner in which our system was made what it is, we are ignorant, but the nebular hypothesis has found favour with many. According to this, an immense nebula, extending beyond the orbit of Neptune, gradually condensed, throwing off in its rotation masses of incandescent matter which, through loss of heat, became our present planets. Of this nebula, our sun is the vast residuum. Of its physical constitution, it is said by Professor Newcomb that it is “for the most part involved in obscurity and doubt.” But there seems to be a general agreement among astronomers, as expressed by one, that “the central part of the sun, and all but a comparatively thin shell on its surface, is in a gaseous condition.” It is intensely hot; life like our own is impossible upon it.

The physical conditions for organic life, as stated by Wallace, in *Man's Place in the Universe*, are:

1. Regularity of heat-supply, resulting in a limited range of temperature.
2. A sufficient amount of solar light and heat.
3. Water in great abundance and universally distributed.
4. An atmosphere of sufficient density, and consisting of the gases which are essential for vegetable and animal life.
5. Alternations of day and night.

These conditions exist only in the case of the earth, and no other planet is habitable.

But can we affirm that these conditions must exist in worlds outside our solar system? May there not be forms of life to which they do not apply? But it is impossible for us to conceive of forms of life essentially unlike the life we know.

Thus our solar system has a well-defined unity. Around the sun as their centre, all the planets revolve, and are absolutely dependent upon it for their light and heat. Is there another such system in the universe?

Turning now to the Stellar system, we see a great variety of masses of matter. First are the nebulæ, generally said to be composed of incandescent gas,—for the most part luminous, but some speak of dark nebulæ,—and no one supposes that they furnish the conditions of habitability.

We look now to the other heavenly bodies. We see countless stars of varying degrees of brightness, which, we are told, are suns, made like our sun of incandescent gas, intensely hot; and many are of a magnitude compared with which our sun shrinks into insignificance. Are these inhabitable? Apparently no more than our sun. But may they not have planets revolving around them which are habitable? Of the existence of such planets we have no proof; they are, and ever must be, invisible. And as we more narrowly

study these suns, we find much to disprove the assertion that they are accompanied by planetary orbs. We have always to keep in mind the great variety of the stellar orbs. There are many binary or double stars, revolving around one another, of which the number known to astronomers is constantly increasing. It is said by Professor Newcomb that single stars are "probably the exception rather than the rule." There are star-clusters, and stars variable, and transient, and comets, and meteors. The greater our knowledge of the Stellar system, the greater the variety we find in its countless orbs, and therefore, if inhabited, there must be a corresponding variety in the forms of creature life. And some astronomers affirm that there are many dead worlds, worlds that were once globes of fire but that have lost their heat and become like the moon, cold and desolate.

The question thus arises, Do we find anywhere in the stellar universe another system like our Solar one? If there is anywhere among its suns one with planets revolving around it, the astronomers can never see it, and can neither affirm nor deny its existence. Our judgment must be based upon probabilities, physical and moral. We ask as to the movements of these suns, and are told by Professor Newcomb that there is no reason to believe that they move in definite orbits of any kind. They move in all directions with all sorts

of velocities. This would seem to show that they cannot have habitable planets dependent upon them. We cannot easily think of binary suns as having planets revolving around them, much less of variable suns.

Upon these and other grounds, not necessary to be mentioned here, it has been said, that probably only one solar system—our own—exists. If there is another, astronomy can give no convincing proof of it. The stellar suns are uninhabitable, and we know not that there are any planets revolving around them, furnishing habitations for rational beings.¹

If future investigations shall show with proximate certainty that there is but one solar system in the universe, our own, and that only one planet in this system is peopled by reasonable beings, it would go far to confirm the belief resting on the Scriptures, that our earth has a very special place

¹ A recent book, *Man's Place in the Universe*, by the eminent scientist, A. R. Wallace, deals with the point before us. He affirms that the later astronomical discoveries "tend to show that our position in the material universe is special, and probably unique; . . . and that the supreme end and purpose of this vast universe was the production and development of the living soul in the perishable body of man." Regarding the universe as limited in extent, he comes to the conclusion that "our sun is one of the central orbs of a globular star-cluster, and that this star-cluster occupies a position very near to, if not actually in the centre of the whole universe." Mr. Wallace also speaks "of our position in the solar system as regards adaptability for organic life," and concludes this position "to be, in all

in the Divine economy. A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* (July, 1904), reviewing the book of Mr. Wallace, says: "Unquestionably, the trend of modern research is to encourage the opinion that the solar system is set apart among the stars, and the earth among the planets, as if for the express purpose of harbouring in safety the frail craft bearing the burden of human life." This is wholly in keeping with what we are told of the Incarnate Son, and of His assumption of our humanity. For Him, indeed, all things were made—all worlds; yet as the world to which He probability, as central and unique as is that of our sun in the stellar universe."

Mr. Wallace says:

"The conclusions which I claim to have shown to have enormous probabilities in their favour are:

"That no other planet in the solar system than our earth is inhabited or habitable.

"That the probabilities are almost as great against any other sun possessing inhabited planets.

"That the nearly central position of our sun is probably a permanent one, and has been specially favourable, perhaps absolutely essential, to life-development on the earth."

He comes to "the provisional conclusion that our earth is the only inhabited planet in the whole stellar universe."

Several distinguished astronomers have dissented from the conclusions of Mr. Wallace, both as to the unique position of our solar system in the universe, and of the earth in our solar system. Other astronomers declare their ignorance. One says that "astronomy has not yet reached an approximate solution of these problems." Another, that "the whole subject matter lies on the very outermost bounds of knowledge." Thus the relation of our solar system to the rest of the universe remains still undefined.

should come, His birthplace, the theatre of His earthly ministry, the abode of His brethren, the seat of His Kingdom, when made new, the earth must have an interest for Him surpassing that of any other orb. It ought not, then, to surprise us that God should give to our solar system a unique place in the universe, and to the earth in our system a unique place among its planets.

But, it is asked, why may not reasonable and moral beings be so constituted physically as to be adapted to the most unlike conditions of environment? Why may they not dwell on Sirius, or on Neptune, or even on our Sun? We may not indeed in this matter limit the power of God. But, in our judgment upon the possibility of various forms of creature life, we are to keep steadily in view the fact of the Incarnation, and that for the Incarnate Son all things were made, and we have seen that our humanity as taken by Him is the highest of created natures. We have thus in Him, as the God-man, the standard of judgment in regard to the material constitution of all other reasonable creatures, supposing them to exist. If the physical conditions of other worlds would not permit human beings, or beings essentially like men, to live upon them, we may legitimately infer that they are without inhabitants. If it be said that there may be intelligent and moral beings constituted very unlike men, and adapted to very different conditions of life,

we find a reply in this fact of the Incarnation, and in the Person of the Lord Christ. It will not be questioned that He, the heavenly and immortal One, the last Adam, is the Perfect Man, and the highest form of created being. And this embraces the body. Just in proportion as the bodily form of the creature departs from His, it is deformed. If, then, the physical conditions of any orb forbid man's existence upon it, we may believe it to be uninhabited.

It is not denied that God may put rational and immortal souls into diverse animal bodies, those of beasts, birds, and even reptiles; but will He do this? Having His own Son before Him, the Heavenly Man, the perfection of beauty and strength, supreme in majesty and glory, will He give to His children, made for His Son, unlike and inferior animal forms? This would be to degrade Heaven from a royal court to a menagerie. No; all His children, wherever they may dwell, will have the bodily form of His Son, the human form, determined upon by Him before the Creation as the highest, capable of being glorified, and never to be changed, except from glory to glory.

It is worthy of notice that no imagination, however vigorous, has been able to depict a reasonable being in any other form than the human. This is the case with the angels. They are pictured as human, except with the addition of wings as symbols. Cherubs are winged human

infants. Those who have attempted to picture the Father as a person, present Him only under the figure of an old man. This incapacity to pass in art beyond the human form is not a narrow limitation of the imagination, some day to be set aside, but because in the Person of the Lord is the perfect ideal, which can therefore never be changed. "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The highest efforts of human genius in art are attempts to set forth in form and colour this ideal.

But it is asked, Can we believe that all these worlds are uninhabited? Is not this to cast an invidious reflection on the Divine wisdom? Surely it is only as the abode of reasonable and moral beings that those worlds can have value in His eyes. From their very existence, therefore, it is said, we must infer their inhabitation. So reason many. But we are here called to make some discriminations. It cannot be admitted that, because these worlds exist, they are all intended for habitation, immediate or even future. In our own solar system, so far as we can judge, only one has inhabitants. Shall we say then that the rest serve no end in the solar economy, that they all could be annihilated, and yet the earth remain habitable as it is? The moon is lifeless and desolate, yet it has important physical relations to the earth. We can say that God has not created a useless particle of matter,

but for what end He has formed such vast orbs their mere existence does not decide.

We come now to the second part of our inquiry. Assuming for the moment that the Stellar worlds, or many of them, are habitable, and inhabited by intelligent moral beings, we ask: What are the relations of these beings to the Incarnate Son? We may make two suppositions: that they are sinless and immortal, or sinful and mortal. Let us take the first of these suppositions, and consider what are the relations of these sinless and immortal beings to the Father and the Son, keeping in mind the fundamental facts that the Son as Incarnate is to all creatures the Image of God, and the only Way of approach to Him.

As made long before man and before the Son assumed our nature, we have no knowledge of the earlier revelations He may have made as the Word to the inhabitants of these worlds of the Divine purpose in His Incarnation, but we know that all their communion with the Father was through Him. Let us then pass over the interval, longer or shorter, from their creation to the Lord's birth on earth, and ask as to their knowledge of the Son's work in man's redemption. As sinless, this work could have for them no practical interest. Already in communion with God, in this communion they are to abide. All that the Son as the Saviour of sinners did on earth, His works, His sufferings and death, all that He is

now doing, or will do till His redemptive work is completed, has value only for sinful man. His assumption of human nature, His teachings on earth, His Resurrection and Ascension, His present Priesthood, and future Kingdom, His coming in glory, the judgment of the quick and the dead,—these they know only as things done on a little far-away orb, and which they cannot regard as of any special importance to themselves, who need no Redeemer.

Thus the sinless inhabitants of these worlds constitute a great multitude outside of Christ's redemptive work, and are not, like the redeemed members of His body, brought into any vital relation with Him. Their life is the natural, the created, not the supernatural, His resurrection life. His ordinances given to the Church are not given for them, and they can take no part in His priestly intercession. We have, then, the spectacle of two bodies of His reasonable creatures: one sinless and one sinful, one immortal and one mortal, one standing in their creation grace, and in the knowledge and communion with the Father which this gives, the other approaching Him with the confession of sin, and seeking His mercy in the name of His Crucified Son. The differing relations in which the two classes stand to the Father must demand distinct rites of worship, the one based upon the sacrifice of the cross, the other without reference to it. As His

servants, the one serve Him in the power of the natural life, the other in the power of the Resurrection and the supernatural life.

It is obvious what a very subordinate place this exclusion of the practical value of His redemptive work from a multitude of His creatures, gives to the Incarnate Son. He is the Creator of all, the Revealer of God to all, the only Way of approach to the Father; yet as Christ Jesus, the Saviour, the Son of man, these inhabitants of other worlds know Him not. His work on earth as the Redeemer from sin is of no practical significance to sinless beings in other worlds. It concerns sinful men only. But this is to do His Person and work great dishonour. As the eternally begotten Son, God manifest in flesh, His every word and every act is of deepest interest. His work in man's salvation has a most profound meaning for all ages and for all creatures.

We have thus far supposed that the inhabitants of other worlds, if inhabited, are sinless, and so are immortal. But let us suppose them, like men, to have fallen from their original state of goodness, and become mortal. As under the law of sin and death they must be saved through the sacrifice of Christ, and therefore must know of that sacrifice, and how it may avail to their salvation. In other words, the Gospel must be preached unto them as unto men, and the Holy Spirit do His work of cleansing and enlightening

through the Divinely appointed ordinances. Has the Son, then, been Incarnate and suffered and died in other worlds? No one will say this, the repetition of the Incarnation is impossible. The Son has not journeyed through the ages from world to world, assuming a new creature-nature in each, dying and rising again, that He may suffer elsewhere anew upon the cross. His work of sacrifice done on the earth and in human nature is done once for all, and is for all sinful beings wherever they may dwell.

Considering, then, the relations of the supposed orders of beings in other worlds, whether sinless or sinful, to the Father through the Son, we see strong objections to believing in their existence as prior to that of man.

We may rather believe that as men are highest in the order of beings, so also in the order of creation, God begins with the highest. We thus see a unity in the Divine work, and a steady progression. The Son is the Creator and all things are made with reference to the manifestation of God through Him. Man is made in God's Image, and the angels are made to minister to him, and the earth is prepared for his habitation. The Son is to take human nature, and in this nature the great question of creature dependence is to be settled. This is preliminary to any further creative acts. When this is settled, and the supernatural life is manifested in the

redeemed, then a new creative work may begin, new habitable worlds be prepared, and their inhabitants enter into the blessedness and glory of that life. But to them, as to men and angels, all approach to the Father must be through the Son.

CHAPTER VIII

CREATUREHOOD AND ITS TRIAL

IT is universally admitted that man and every moral creature to be responsible for his acts, must be a free agent. But would God give to His creatures a free will? How is this compatible with His Creatorship and absolute sovereignty? Would it not make the creature capable of disobedience and rebellion, and thus bring the possibility of disorder and strife into every inhabited world? But on the other hand, if man were without free-will—the power to choose between good and evil, obedience and disobedience—his conduct could have no moral quality. He must not only know the distinction between good and evil, but be able consciously to choose the good and reject the evil.

We know, in point of fact, that God was pleased to make man a free moral agent, and we cannot believe that He, who knows the end from the beginning, was ignorant of the use man would make of the freedom, and of the consequent disobedience and strife. He foresaw that the great temptation of the creature would be to affirm his

independence of the Creator, and yet He planted in the Garden the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for without this knowledge there can be no real sense of moral obligation. The command that Adam should not eat of its fruit, being a negative one, was a trial, whether he would continue by faith in the goodness of his first estate, and thus continue in the love of his Creator, or rebel against Him. Which should rule, the Divine or the human will? If there was to prevail in the world a moral order, there could be but one will; discordant wills would bring confusion and strife.

We thus stand at the very beginning of creature history face to face with a great problem, for this matter concerned not man only, but all intelligent beings whom God should create, for all would be free agents. Their wills must be brought into accordance with His will, and this by their voluntary act. God would be obeyed and honoured as the one Supreme Ruler, and this obedience must not be compulsory, but spontaneous and joyful, and this honour paid from a loving heart. He would be recognised, not only as the Creator and Lord, but also as the Father to whose love His children respond in glad observance of all His commands. In loving but entire obedience, the foundations of His moral government are laid.

It is obvious that this relation of the rational creature to God's moral rule is a matter of vital

importance. Shall there be obedience or disobedience, dependence or independence, peace or war? Is the universe in all its inhabited worlds to be the scene of continual rebellion? Is God to be ever sitting as a Judge, and sin and punishment to be the perpetual order? Can He be honoured in a world where are discord and strife? Would He create worlds and fill them with inhabitants who might at any moment rise up against Him, rejecting His authority, and refusing to obey His laws? We cannot think this of an infinitely good and wise God. He creates rational beings that they may have communion with Him, be workers together with Him, abide in His peace, and be partakers of His blessedness. Shall this purpose in Creation be accomplished? From every orb shall there arise songs of praise, ceaseless hallelujahs, or shouts of defiance and battle-cries? Better that all worlds remain uninhabited and desolate, than be peopled with the disobedient and unholy.

But how shall this possibility of disobedience and rebellion be guarded against? Will God take from His rational creatures their free-will? No. They must be put to the proof, and learn to know themselves, their absolute dependence, and the paramount duty of obedience. If they set themselves against their Maker, and exalt their wills above His will, they must learn by a sad experience the consequence of their foolish and

wicked act. The creature, even the highest, must be made to know how weak he is in himself, and that his strength consists in abiding in God.

It is plain that this matter concerns not any one order only of intelligent beings, but all, for the relation of all to God is the same, and obedience demanded alike from all.

But this trial of the creature nature in its relation to its Creator, whether it will acknowledge and rejoice in its dependence upon Him, or madly strive to be independent, need not be repeated in the case of every individual world where rational beings may be found, and this through the ages to come. It may be made in some one world, and made once for all; and it was the Divine will that it be made in the earth and in the nature of man. As a point fundamental to moral government, it must be determined at the very beginning of creature history. God would be known by all moral beings throughout all ages as the Supreme Ruler whose will all must unreservedly obey.¹

But the question may be asked, Why should there be this trial? Having made His creature

¹ The place of obedience in the education of a child is seen in an extract from a teacher (*Helen Keller's Life*, p. 308): "I saw clearly that it was useless to teach her language, or anything else, until she learned to obey me. . . . The more I think about it the more certain I am that obedience is the gateway through which knowledge, yes, and love too, enter the mind of the child."

good, why should not God be satisfied with this goodness, and preserve it? Why should He permit Adam to be tempted? If not tempted, might he not have remained good? To find an answer we must consider the two relations in which the creature may stand to his Creator. That under all possible conditions he is dependent, follows from the fact of his creation; yet we may still take the distinction of an absolute and a relative dependence. We may here take Adam as an illustration. Created good, and endowed with powers which he was to exercise, and in whose exercise there was place for his free-will, he may be said to have had a relative independence—a sphere of action assigned to him by God, in which was room for personal freedom. In the voluntary exercise of his powers within this sphere, he was to fulfil the duties God had given him to do. He was not, indeed, independent of his Creator within this sphere, but, having faith in God, who had placed him in it, he was to believe himself able to do all that came within it. To distrust this sufficiency would be to show a want of faith in God, who never assigns a duty but He gives the power to fulfil it.

We thus see how the position of a moral being created good, a free agent with an appointed sphere of action, involved in its very nature a semi-independence. It was right in Adam to have a certain trust in himself. If he was put into the

Garden to dress it and to keep it, he must believe himself able to fulfil this command in virtue of the powers God had given him, in the exercise of his own judgment and without special Divine help. But this relative independence in a creature with free-will tended to spread beyond its appointed bounds. That self-reliance, which faith in God's appointments rightly gave, might easily become overweening self-sufficiency; and the desire arise to change relative to absolute independence. This disposition to pass beyond the limits appointed to the created nature is seen in Adam's temptation, "Ye shall be as gods." Perhaps also an illustration of this may be found in the angels who, we are told, "left their first estate," or did not keep within the limitations assigned them, and yet were not like Adam tempted from without. They would be more than ministering spirits to others; they would be rulers, masters.

In a realm of reasonable beings, having a limited sphere of action, but with free-will, with power to disobey God, and set themselves in opposition to Him, it is plain that there could be no assured permanency of order and peace. Rebellion against His limitations might at any moment break out, and the creature in his pride and self-sufficiency assert his independence of his Creator. God therefore would take from the creature all reliance upon himself, all trust in his own goodness. He must at the first be put to the test, he

must be made conscious of his own weakness, and feel that, renouncing any creature strength, he must trust in God alone.

Having created angels and men, it was shown by their experience that, retaining free-will, no reliance could be placed upon their native goodness as a stable foundation for the Divine order. Should God then take away their free-will? No; for this would change a moral into a mechanical government. This knowledge of their weakness must be given them at the first. From the beginning, the creature must be taught to renounce all confidence in himself as able by his own strength to do God's works; in God must be all his trust.

The will of God in permitting this trial of created goodness must be seen in its relation to His purpose in the Incarnation of His Son. It was His will that a sure foundation should be laid on which He might build the superstructure of all creature life. He would not build on the quicksands of individual wills, but on the stable foundation of the creaturehood taken by His own Son. On Him as the perfectly obedient One the whole purpose of God in Creation could rest.

Having seen why this trial of the creature should be made, and made in human nature, the question comes, How shall it be made? We can think of but two ways—in the person of every individual, or of some one as the representative

of all. It is evident that if every creature coming into the world is to have his individual trial, as had Adam, this trial must continue to the last one of the race; and as the influences active in forming the moral character are continually changing, there can be no uniform rule of judgment. But we need not consider this. We know that God in His wisdom chose headship. He made Adam, the first of the race, its head, its representative. In him, and not in every one of his posterity, should the trial of humanity be made. According to its results in him should humanity abide in its creature goodness, or fall into a lower and evil condition.

But we are here carefully to note that this headship did not take away the individual responsibility of those represented in the head. Adam's disobedience brought the race into a condition of alienation from God, but not into a condition which shut the penitent out of the mercy and grace of God. They, Adam included, were put under a probation of grace. A new trial was given, and the question before them was, Would they be obedient to God? It was a matter of individual responsibility. The nature given them had been tried, and had fallen under the trial; this would not be repeated. The essential element in the new trial was to confess this failure, and henceforth to put no trust in themselves as good, but to trust only in God.

Confessing their weakness, they must cast themselves upon His mercy, and He would teach them His will, and give them strength to fulfil it.

This union of headship and of individual responsibility is seen in all the dealings of God with men. It is seen in Adam and in Christ. But nowhere does headship set aside individual responsibility. Every child of Adam is put on his own personal trial, whether he will obey the will of God as it is made known to him, or disobey. And so is it with every child of Christ. By God's act he is made a branch in the Vine; but he may become a withered branch. Whether he will abide in Christ, or not, is a question for himself to answer. Headship does not make those under it passive. Adam's children were not given over helpless to destruction, nor Christ's children saved without their own co-operation. Both must be diligent in working with God their salvation.

We dwell here chiefly on the trial of man. If it be said that angels sinned before man, this is true; but the higher place given to man in the Divine purpose, as already shown, explains why the trial of his faith and obedience is given the prominent place it holds in the sacred record. Doubtless, the trial of the angels was substantially the same as the trial of man, and teaches the same lesson, the weakness of the creature. Some did not abide in their first estate. But with the cause of their sin and fall we are not now concerned.

God's great work of manifestation is in man; and his sin and fall are therefore set forth for the instruction of all creatures.

It is to be noted that this trial of created natures was in that nature highest of all, that which is most capable of knowing God, and of communion with Him. It was, therefore, in this nature that the manifold evils of sin could be most clearly shown, as the richest soil brings forth most abundantly thorns and thistles and all noxious plants. In humanity in its many forms of development could every species of alienation from God and of hostility to Him be shown—all the heights and depths of wickedness. The history of the human race is a most fearful illustration of the evils which disobedience and alienation from God bring with them, and therefore has a deep and permanent interest for all His reasonable creatures.

Thus, both from its special relations to God, and its great moral capabilities of good and evil, humanity was best fitted to be the nature in which the trial should be made, whether separated from Him, it is, or is not, sufficient for itself. In the person of the first man was the trial made, but its lesson is for all time and for all moral beings; it stands, therefore, in brief terms upon the first page of the Bible, and all the subsequent pages of human history serve to show the depths into which our race has fallen through disobedi-

ence—the depths of savagery and barbarism, the deeds of malice and cruelty, of lust and hate, of oppression and robbery; and we are taught most impressively what crimes men, separated from God, are capable of in their relations to one another. Instead of the crystal streams of Eden watering the peaceful garden, rivers of blood have watered the earth, and the trophies of death stand everywhere in our sepulchres and graveyards as in mockery of the living God and the risen Lord. And the end is not yet. Humanity has not yet shown forth all its capacities of wickedness. There is yet to be made the last and most determined attempt of human pride to attain its highest good without God, to be absolutely independent.

How God in His wisdom has provided that when this trial between Himself and the creature for supremacy is over, disobedience shall never more enter the heavenly realms, though there shall be freedom of will, may be spoken of when we consider the supernatural life given us in Christ.

We may now see why the Cross should stand as a symbol on the first page of creature history, both as a warning against disobedience and a proof of Divine holiness and love. All generations to come must be taught that only as abiding in holy obedience can they please God, and be blessed by Him. In themselves they may put no

trust. It is only through the Crucified One that any, even the highest and holiest, can approach the Father; and none, therefore, may be ignorant of the story of the cross, and of the proof it gives both of God's holy severity and of His Fatherly love. It is not too much to believe that during the coming ages, all who look upon the Son will see the marks of the nails and the spear, and know that the sacrifice offered on Calvary opens the way to the creature to come acceptably before the Father; and all those in the new creation who have not sinned will, as they look upon Him, be reminded of their own weakness, and be taught that they stand accepted of the Father only as abiding in the Son.

How long has been the trial of man in the past we know not, nor how long will be the time of his trial in the future; but we may believe, as already said, that this trial will be long enough to bring out all that is in him, both of good and evil. For this a long period may be needed, for every year brings some new developments. History never repeats itself; every century, indeed, every year, shows new phases and brings out new forms of character. The trial of man must, therefore, continue till all the secret capacities of human nature for good and for evil are brought to light. God alone can know when this is done, when the lowest depths have been fathomed, and the loftiest heights of faith been reached; but the

trial is not finished, and all that is in man cannot be revealed till the end of the redemptive work, and the Judge sits upon the great white throne. Then the light of God will clearly illumine the path from Eden downward. When every capacity of wickedness, every form of rebellion, shall have been exhausted, then will man's history remain as an eternal lesson to all God's creatures in all His realms of the fatal results of disobedience, and as a monument both to His goodness and to His holiness.

CHAPTER IX

NATURE, UNNATURE, SUPERNATURE

THE Holy Scriptures present to us the earth and man in three successive conditions of being, the Natural, the Unnatural, and the Supernatural, embracing the Past, the Present, and the Future. These several conditions I propose to examine in the light of the fact of the Incarnation. We begin our inquiry with a definition of terms, and first of all, the term Nature.

What is Nature, and what is its relation to Unnature on the one side, and Supernature on the other? I answer: Nature embraces all that exists except God—all material worlds with their forces, all kinds of life, vegetable and animal, all rational beings, angels and men, with their moral and intellectual powers and faculties—all these are included in the realm of the natural; God only, as the Creator of Nature, is not included in it. If this definition of Nature be accepted, we have a clear line of distinction between Nature and Supernature, and an answer to those who limit the natural to that which takes place in the world without the agency, voluntary and intentional,

of man. Man, having a free-will, we are told, is not in the natural realm.¹

But whilst this distinctive position of man in Nature as having a free-will is to be fully recognised, and his power of original causation, yet the exercise of his free-will is not properly called supernatural. A free-will is a faculty natural to man as a rational and responsible being, and without which he could be classed only as a higher animal. But highly endowed as he is, man is still in the order of the natural, and a part of it. We must therefore seek the supernatural elsewhere, and this will be best done when we

¹ It is said by Dr. Bushnell (*Nature and the Supernatural*): "Nature is that created realm of being or substance which has an activity or going on or progress from within itself, or under or by its own laws. In this realm is a chain of cause and effect, or scheme of orderly succession determined from within the scheme itself. Everything that comes to pass that would not come to pass by Nature's own internal action under the mere laws of cause and effect, is Supernatural."

According to this definition of Nature, there are two wholly distinct realms which we may call the mechanical, involuntary, or natural, and the personal, voluntary, or supernatural. In the first of these all agents are under a chain of cause and effect, determined from within, and in which there is no voluntary action; in the second is man alone, who has free-will, and is thus able to act upon the chain of cause and effect from without, and to change the succession of events. Thus the supernatural element in Nature lies in the human will. Man through his will is an originating cause. He can set in motion a new series of consequences. He can suspend for a time a physical law, as that of gravitation, and thus change the natural order of events.

consider the supernatural in our Lord. Of His supernatural state, and how He attained to it, we shall speak later.

We are to note that what is here said of man is true also of the angels, who, like men, have free wills. They have superhuman powers, but however great these powers may be, they are natural to them. If they do anything beyond these, or supernatural, it is because they receive from God new and special help for this end.

From this examination of terms, we turn to the three conditions of being thus designated, and distinguish them according to the relative degrees of goodness. In Nature, we find the good, but not the perfect; in Unnature, the good corrupted—evil mingled with it; in Supernature, the good raised to the highest degree, the perfect.

Supernature, Nature as raised to the highest degree—the perfect, incorruptible.

Nature, as created; the good, not the perfect, corruptible.

Unnature, Nature as corrupted; evil, but not absolute.

In comparing these three conditions of creature being, the Natural, the Unnatural, the Supernatural, we note that the first in time, the Natural, holds, as regards its goodness, a mediate position. It is the good, but not the perfect, and it may become the evil. It has in it the potentialities of both lowest evil and highest good, which, is made

dependent upon the moral relation of man to God. As it was possible for man to sin, and come under the law of death, so the earth can come under "the bondage of corruption." Therefore, in the formation of the material world, inclusive of man, do we see a foresight of the possibilities of both good and evil, in their culmination and provision made for them, for the New Jerusalem and for the Lake of Fire. But an evil condition was not to be absolute or permanent, either in man or his habitation. God in His wisdom so ordered the condition of both in their relation to one another, that the supremacy of the moral over the physical might everywhere be seen. When man sinned, the earth came under the bondage of corruption; when he is freed from the law of sin and death, the earth is freed from that bondage.

Mention has been made of the possibilities of change both for evil and good in the constitution of the material world. It will be remembered that we are speaking of these physical changes as good or evil only in their relation to man as affecting his well-being. Turning first to the inorganic realm, where can be no moral action, we see that the changes from one state to another are possible through the qualities given to matter. According to the atomic theory, we find a large number of single, irresolvable elements, which through changing combinations develop different qualities. Chemists tell us that some elements

brought together form a union so close as to create a new substance, differing entirely in nature and qualities from its constituents. "In every case of real and perfect combination, the qualities of the constituents are lost, and seem to be even destroyed, so entirely have they disappeared." It is obvious what a field is here open for Divine action in changing through new combinations of existing elements physical good into evil, or evil into good; and of these changes effected in the laboratory of God, we know nothing, except of their effects.

But if the atomic theory of matter be given up, as many are doing, we must consider the electric, which is taking its place. We are told that the atom is made up of particles or corpuscles, and that these may be transmuted one into another. One substance may thus be transmuted into another by the increase or diminution of the number of its particles, as silver into gold, and gold into silver, common pebbles into precious stones, precious stones into common pebbles.¹

¹ Several new elements have recently been discovered, and one of these, radium, on account of its peculiar qualities, has awakened great interest in scientific circles. It is constantly emitting rays, without any apparent diminution of its substance, and generating heat without its loss. One high authority speaks of it as possibly the cause of the heat of the earth. A distinguished scientist speaks of these and other properties of radium as "transcending all others in their revolutionary possibilities." Some of the conclusions drawn from these very recent discoveries are noteworthy. A

If it prove true that there is "one ultimate material with a great variety of forms," we see how greatly the whole fashion of the earth, and of all its material bodies may be changed. The lower may be transmuted into the higher, and the higher into the lower. No imagination is able to picture the changes which an hour might make in the inorganic world. The vision of the Holy City, with its streets of gold and gates of pearl, might become literally true. There is no new creation, no new elements, only a transmutation, or new combinations. It is obvious what confusion would be in the commercial world if there were no unchangeable standard of values.

It need not be said that, until we know far more of the properties and forces of matter, our speculations as to the manner of Creation, and the future changes of the world, are alike idle. It may also appear that no such long periods of time were needed for the creative process as is now

writer in the *Edinburgh Review* (October, 1903) speaks of these modern investigations as "promising to revolutionise our knowledge of the structure of the universe." It is said by another that matter may be "a transient and evanescent phenomenon, subject to gradual decay and decomposition by the action of its own internal forces and motions"; and by another that we "are brought face to face with the impenetrable secret of creative agency"; by another that "the disintegration of the atom is a sign of the coming extinction of the universe"; by another that "no line of demarcation between matter and mind, or the material and the immaterial can be drawn."

maintained by many scientists. As we are told that in our bodies the mortal condition will give place to the immortal, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," through the power of the indwelling but invisible resurrection life in us then put forth, so may the new creation be very sudden and rapid. The most amazing changes may be made in all material realms through forces now existent, but to us unknown. Unless science can say that it has thoroughly investigated all regions where matter is found, and knows all its properties and modes of action, it has no right to speak dogmatically, and make the measure of its knowledge the measure of reality. The bearing of this on new creation will be noted later.

The ground of these several physical conditions is to be found in the moral relations of man to God. He was made good, and in this natural goodness it was his duty and happiness to have continued. But becoming disobedient, he came into an unnatural state, and the earth with him. But redemption was possible, and through the Son Incarnate, and in His Person—the Superhuman Man—the unnatural was lifted into the supernatural. The work of the Son was not merely redemptive, the restoration of a lost condition of goodness, but regenerative and creative. The old was in His Resurrection made new; not new in its substance, but in its qualities. As will be seen in considering Christ's miracles, there is

in them no restoration of the natural, much less any elevation into the supernatural. The preservation of the natural or creation goodness was dependent upon Adam's obedience; the resurrection of the Son lifts the natural into a higher sphere, the perfect and permanent.

With these remarks, we pass to the consideration of these several conditions.

CHAPTER X

NATURE, THE NATURAL

IN Nature, then, we sum up all that was created by God—all creature being. This was pronounced good: "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1: 31). There was no evil in the Creation, nothing adverse to the Divine purpose.

But it is said by many in our day that physical science, and particularly Geology, contradicts this, and finds proof of evil in the earth before man. A few words must be said upon this point. But before we can rightly examine it, we must keep clearly in mind the distinction between physical and moral evil.

If we speak of evil in the inorganic realm, we are to note that here evil is only material disorder; it can properly be called evil only as it injuriously affects animal or human life. If there were destructive tempests and earthquakes, if the ground brought forth thorns and thistles, if there were terrible monsters in sea and on land, before man was on earth, this had no moral significance, and was of no real moment. But

after man came, all that took place in the material world was to be judged of as good or evil by its relation to him. As man's moral and spiritual education is the great end of God, we may well believe that He will so control all material and external forces as to conduce to this end. It is difficult to see how, without such control, there can be a moral government, a government which rewards the good and punishes the evil.

What, then, are the proofs that the earth gives of physical evil? These are summed up at great length in the *Essay on Nature*, by J. S. Mill, who comes to the conclusion that the earth could not have been made by a good and all-powerful God. If good, He is not all-powerful; if all-powerful, He is not good.

When we come to analyse the supposed proofs of evil before man's advent, we find them either in the inorganic realm or the lower realm of animal life. But as to the former, they are of no importance. If the earth in its formation was subject to violent convulsions,—the mighty forces struggling in its bosom for mastery, the heavens red with volcanic fire, the solid land shaken by its incessant earthquakes, the seas raging and furiously dashing against their dissolving shores—all this simply points to the process by which our orb was fitted for man's habitation. For us to find evil in this process is folly.

But we turn to the realm of animal life, for as

the Bible tells us, the creation of animals preceded that of man. And what proofs of evil do we find here? These, it is said, are found in the existence of the monsters in the sea and upon the land, and of poisonous serpents and reptiles, and of beasts that prey upon one another. The same is true of all the vegetable poisons, and of everything that is destructive of life, or causes pain and suffering.

It will be kept clearly in mind that we are speaking of animal life before man appeared upon the stage, where the evil complained of is chiefly one of physical pain. How much pain animals feel is wholly unknown to us, but it is most probable that even those of the highest organisation are far less sensitive than the lowest of men, and that the lower are wholly insensible to it, and as there is no knowledge of death there is no fear of it.

The question then resolves itself into this: What relations should God have established among the irrational animals? Those who object to animal death should ask themselves what kind of a world would this be if animal life were immortal? As to disease, pains, and sufferings preceding death, whatever their degree, we only know that they are not the fruit of sin as in the case of man, but the natural conditions of existence which God in His wisdom has established. To ask why He made the Carnivora, is the same

as to ask why man was so made as to eat animal flesh.

Some who find proofs of the existence of evil in the earth before man, see a solution in God's foresight of man's sin. It is said by Dr. Bushnell: "As certainly as sin is to be encountered in God's plan, its marks and consequences will be appearing anticipatively." This is doubtless true. We may find an illustration in St. Peter's words, when he speaks of the earth as "stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3: 7, R. V.). An illustration of this Divine foresight of the possibilities of evil through sin, and provision made for them, appears in the physical constitution of man. He was not when created under the law of death, yet was so constituted that he might die. In his creation, he was made a compound being, and in the constituent elements was the possibility of separation. This separation, or death, was made dependent upon his obedience or disobedience; and because disobedient, he came under the law of death. God thus anticipates the future, and provides for it. The earth, as the theatre where good and evil were to strive for mastery, was provided at its creation with symbols expressive of the Divine acts both of judgment and mercy, and with forces powerful to effect them.

There are some who find in the earth's history, in the many cataclysms and catastrophes through

which it has passed, proofs of Satan's activity and power. Upon this point nothing positive can be said. Geology affirms that in the process of the earth's formation many powerful forces were at work, "floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire"; but what control over these evil angels may have had we cannot say. Satan is always the opposer or antagonist of God in all His works, and although he cannot destroy, he can mar and corrupt.

We may then conclude that in view of the Divine purpose of the moral trial of man, there was nothing in the earth as constituted by God for his habitation, to impugn Divine wisdom or goodness or power. All that He made was made by Him in foresight of the whole future of the race, and was good. As made for man, and the place where his education, mental and moral, was to be carried on till the Perfect was reached, we may well believe that the several stages of its physical condition would be suited in Divine wisdom to this end, and each stage be adapted to the measure of his moral development.

Thus God, to whom as a Moral Governor the moral is far more important than the material, can through new combinations of elements, wholly unknown to us, change the Natural, or the good, into the Unnatural, or the evil, and then into the Supernatural and perfect.

CHAPTER XI

UNNATURE, THE UNNATURAL

WE have seen in some of its features what Nature was as made, or its creation condition. We pass to its second condition, that of Unnature.¹

The period of Adam's abode in Paradise, or the period of the natural and good, seems to have been brief, though it may have been much longer than some suppose. His disobedience changed his relations to God, and he could no longer abide in that free communion with Him which was the privilege of the innocent and obedient. Adam was expelled from Paradise, the sentence of death was passed upon him, and the ground was cursed.

Several points meet us here for consideration—the effects, both physical and spiritual, of Adam's sin upon himself and his posterity, its effects upon the earth as his dwelling-place, and its bearings

¹ The term is not new, though not often used. It is several times used by Dr. Bushnell (*Natural and Supernatural*): "The scheme of Nature is itself unstrung and mistuned to a very great degree by man's agency in it, so as to be better Unnature than Nature."

upon the relations of the angels, both of the good and evil, to men.

We may note first the effect of his disobedience upon Adam's own personal relation to God—his exclusion from the Garden and the Divine Presence, his knowledge of his nakedness, his fear of God, and his hiding himself, his exculpation of himself, and accusation of others. Doubtless Adam and Eve repented, and humbled themselves, and made confession of their sin; but we are not told that they were re-admitted to the Garden. There was no restoration of the early relation. They had been tried, and had failed in the trial, and it was not to be repeated. Adam and all his posterity came into the condition of the fall.

This moral condition may be briefly stated in the terms of the Scriptures. He came under "the law of sin and death." We are not called to enter into any theological discussions here as to original sin, or total depravity. The history of our race is the strongest proof that there is in us, as one has expressed it, "a persistent tendency to wrong-doing." Every man who has lived may apply to himself the words of St. Paul: "Not what I would, that do I practise, but what I hate, that I do" (Rom. 7: 15, R. V.); or, as said by one of old: "I see the better and approve, but I follow the worse." Like our first parents, we are conscious of our sinfulness, are afraid, and hide

ourselves from God. The spirit of disobedience that ruled in them rules in us. It is the root from which grows all manner of evil fruits, producing at last in the lawless one, contempt of all God's commandments, and open defiance of His authority.

Alienated from God, the Father, we are alienated also from one another. We reject the bonds of brotherhood, and human history becomes little more than a record of strife and bloodshed. We are so familiar with this incessant warfare that we regard it as almost normal, and speak of years of peace as exceptional years. Perhaps, indeed, there has never been a year in which the work of human slaughter has not been going on, and the highest civilisation presents the most deadly instruments of destruction.

From Eden downward, there have always been the two classes, those striving to obey God so far as His will is known to them, and the persistently disobedient. To the former, God makes Himself known more and more clearly; to the latter, He is more and more hidden. In a real sense, the Lord's words, "Let the tares and wheat grow together until the harvest," have been true of the whole history of man. There has been a progressive development of good and evil, a ripening of the tares and wheat, and the harvest will be when both are fully ripe. It is plain that such a contemporaneous moral development must take

place under the conditions of our fallen nature. A man who wilfully disobeys the law of the land in one instance will more readily disobey it the second time. Those who dwell among the lawless will be strengthened in their lawlessness. And those who consciously break God's laws will not keep Him in their knowledge. Thus crime and ignorance will both increase till wickedness shall come to the full. On the other hand, he who would keep the law of God is strengthened through the companionship of those like minded and the example of their obedience. To the obedient, God reveals Himself more and more, and they go on unto perfection.

This development of evil as well as of good began immediately after the fall. We are told that the number of those walking in their own ways rapidly multiplied, and at last God "looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt," "the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. 6: 12, 11). But amidst the tares were some grains of wheat, some faithful ones, who walked with God, like Enoch, who were obedient, like Noah.

As Adam came in his spirit under the law of sin, so did he in his body under the law of death. The connection between sin and death is brought out clearly to view in Genesis (2: 17; 3: 19), and is everywhere emphasised in the Scriptures as "the wages of sin" (Rom. 6: 23). Death prevailed indeed before Adam in the vegetable and

animal realms, and must have done so unless all living things were to be immortal, which no one can suppose. A limitation of life was essential. But to death, man was not originally subject. As has been said, he was so constituted that the two elements of his humanity, body and soul, could be separated, but this separation was made dependent upon his own action—his obedience or disobedience. There was the possibility of dying, and the possibility of not dying. "Death passed upon all men for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5: 12). If Adam had not sinned, he would not have come under the law of death. Life is man's true condition, in which all the physical powers given him at Creation are in full and perfect exercise.

It is well to note the consistency with which the connection of death with sin is held throughout the Scriptures, and the emphasis put upon it (Num. 19: 11). The subjection of man to death is a universal and visible proof that he is not in his right relation to God, the Living One. As we see flowers and shrubs touched by a frost withering, so is it with the race of man. There is a blight upon it. The frost of God's anger has touched it; it withers, and dies. Thus death is a sign which all may see, that the race is under Divine displeasure, and is a continual reminder that there cannot be fulness of life so long as man remains under the law of sin. Earth disfigured

and defiled with graves shows that it is still under the sway of him "who has the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2: 14). And its proudest mausoleums, filled with dead men's bones, witness that he is the great prince of this present world.

We may also note how, through the two conditions of men, embodied and disembodied, God has before His eye two distinct realms, and may at His pleasure transfer from one to the other. So long as the law of death which He has established continues, all must pass from the embodied and visible into the disembodied and invisible realm. This law, we are told, has been in a few instances set aside, as with Enoch and Elijah. And He has brought some from the dead, the most to die again, as Lazarus, but others, as our Lord, and probably Moses, to die no more.

Of the condition of separated souls it is not necessary here to speak. We have already seen why God in His revelations to men has preserved such silence upon this matter. But it is probable that in the realm of the departed may be several abiding places corresponding to their moral distinctions, and possibly to the several stages of redemption. Of those made members of His Body, partakers of His resurrection life, it is said that they "sleep in Jesus," and the Apostle Paul was desirous to depart, and "be with Him."

The change caused through the sentence of

death was in the relation of the material forces to human life. Not yet under the law of death, all these forces were subordinate to life and man's good. To man dwelling in Eden they were not harmful; but they might become to him instruments of evil and suffering. The gentle rain might become a devastating flood, the refreshing breeze a destructive tornado, the life-giving sun a fiery furnace. The relation of these material forces to him was dependent upon his moral relation to his Creator. This we know, that if sin had not first entered Paradise, disorder, disease, and death would have found no entrance there.¹

¹ We are so accustomed to the universal reign of death that we can scarce think of it as not in the natural order. It is only as we see the manifold forms of disease that we can make real to ourselves what miseries sin has brought with it. Milton, in the revelation made by the archangel Michael to Adam of the future of his race, as through sin becoming subject to death, thus speaks:

“Death, thou hast seen
In its first shape on man; but many shapes
Of Death, and many are the ways that lead
To his grim cave, all dismal; yet to sense
More terrible at the entrance than within.
Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die,
By fire, flood, famine, by intemperance more
In meats and drinks, which on the earth shall bring
Diseases dire.

“Immediately a place
Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark;
A lazarus-house it seem'd, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased; all maladies

A word may be said upon the bearing of the change from the natural to the unnatural on the power and activity of the angels, both good and evil. Good angels first entered at the Fall upon their ministry as helpers of those who should be heirs of salvation. They had charge to watch over them, to protect them (Ps. 91: 11). Of their watchful care and protection, which doubtless then began, the Scriptures give us many proofs.

That to evil spirits as enemies of God and His persistent opposers, the material and spiritual disorder which came with the sins of Adam opened a wide field of activity is obvious. With-

Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic-pangs,
Dæmoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans. Despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch;
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked
With vows, as their chief good, and final hope.
Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
Dry-ey'd behold?"

A well-read physician of to-day might without doubt much enlarge this list. Each new stage of civilisation seems to bring with it new forms of disease, or at least modifications of the old. It is said by eminent medical men that not a perfectly healthy person lives on the earth.

out ascribing to them any native power of inflicting disease or death, yet the connection of spirit and body is such that having spiritual control it were easy through indulgence of evil passions and lusts to lead to disease and death. We may well believe that it was by Satan's instigation that Cain killed his brother (John 8: 44), and that he has forwarded in every way the spirit of disobedience and of self-will, and his power increases as men become more and more alienated from God and contemptuous of His authority. The greater the spiritual disorder, the greater the Satanic power in the material realms. As we are assured by the Lord and the Apostles that the last days will be perilous days, full of disorder and strife, we may expect that the activity and power of evil spirits will then be at their highest. At this time, also, will the ministry of the good angels be most needed, and we may believe will be most fully rendered.

We turn from the sentence of death on man to the nature and degree of the changes brought by man's sin into the physical constitution of the earth. These we cannot know in detail. Of the changes made possible through the properties of matter and its new combinations enough has been said. That the earth as man's dwelling-place, and the place for his mental and spiritual training and discipline, should have its stages of change ordered by God, corresponding to the develop-

ment of man's powers, physical and moral, is intrinsically probable, and in these he is called to be a co-worker with God. If Adam had been at his creation made perfect in all the departments of his being, then his dwelling-place would have been perfect in all its adaptations to him, and so incapable of being changed; but we are told that while yet in Eden, he was bidden to "subdue the earth," clearly implying that it was to be brought to a higher condition by his labours upon it. He was not, as some now say, the creature or product of his environment, for the dwelling is for the man, not the man for the dwelling. The physical is subordinate to the moral, and therefore the environment is changed as the Divine purpose in him progresses; and doubtless the earth has long been and is now daily in process of preparation for the time when, the moral being perfected, all shall be made new.

That the curse pronounced upon the ground, that it should bring forth thorns and thistles, and that in toil man should eat of it all the days of his life, was in consequence of Adam's sin, is plain from all parts of the Scriptures, and especially from the expression of the Apostle Paul: "The creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself, also, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. . . . For we know that the whole creation groaneth

and travailleth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8: 20-22, R.V.). Whether the Apostle includes under the term "creation" other worlds than ours, is here unimportant; but it is most reasonable to think that it is confined to our earth, as standing in closest relation to man, and thus sharing in his good or ill. The expressions "vanity," "bondage of corruption," "travailing and groaning in pain," set forth a physical condition of the earth very unlike that at the first when God pronounced all that He made "good." But the force of these expressions we can only imperfectly understand. There are many forces in nature active beyond our ken, and of whose operation we know only through their sensible results. We see the disorder, but know not its causes.

CHAPTER XII

SUPERNATURE, THE SUPERNATURAL

FROM Unnature, the unnatural, we turn now to Supernature, the supernatural. This is the last and highest condition into which Nature can come. It has its origin in the Resurrection of our Lord. When He was raised from the dead, then for the first time the supernatural appears in the life of man. The Son took our humanity under its condition of mortality. He died and was buried, but His flesh did not see corruption, nor was His soul left in Hades (Acts 2: 27). He rose from the dead in a new and higher type of life. Now as immortal could He enter on a new and creative phase of His redemptive work (Rev. 1: 18). He could be made the great High Priest, the Head over all things to the Church, the Prince of the kings of the earth.

It is this change in the humanity of our Lord, wrought at His Resurrection, from the earthly to the heavenly, from the mortal to the immortal, that must be carefully noted by us. It is the Apostle, St. Peter, who states most clearly the time and nature of the change: "Being put to

death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison (1 Peter 3: 18, 19, R. V.). It is now generally accepted that "quickened in the spirit" does not mean, as expressed in the common version, "quickened by the Holy Spirit," but as in the Revised Version, "in His own spirit." Flesh and spirit are here used to denote the two component parts of our humanity. He was put to death in the flesh, but in His spirit He was quickened. The spirit is the life principle in man, and this in our Lord was vivified. There was not a new creation, but the communication to the old of a new and higher type and potency of life. The spirit was endowed with higher powers, and brought into new and indissoluble relations to the material body (Rom. 6: 9). It is in this quickening at His Resurrection that we may find the fulfilment of His words: "As the Father has life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself" (John 5: 26), and to become a source of life to others. Being Himself quickened in spirit, He could become "a quickening"—life-giving—spirit to others. The Apostle Paul says: "The first Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor. 15: 45, R. V.). The life which He had in Himself, the gift of the Father, was not His life as the eternally-Begotten, for this was not the gift of the Father to Him, nor could it be

given to any created being; nor was it that in mortal flesh which He took at His birth of the Virgin, but that taken at His birth from Death, "the first-born from the dead." The same Apostle declares (Acts 13: 33) the words of the Psalmist (Psalm 2)—"Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten Thee"—to have been fulfilled when the Father raised Him from the dead. In this new condition of being, "the natural"—psychical—body became "the spiritual"—pneumatical—body (1 Cor. 15: 44), so that the separation of the two elements of our humanity became henceforth impossible. "I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1: 18). "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him" (Rom. 6: 9). It is only as immortal that He could fulfil the office of High Priest through the ages (Heb. 5: 6) and His Kingdom be without end.

It is to be noted that the place the Resurrection of our Lord holds in Christian theology is not that a dead man has been restored to life, not to die any more; but that He now enters into a condition of being which enables Him to manifest Himself as the Incarnate Son, the heavenly Man. It is the manifestation of Himself as risen and glorified that proves the Incarnation. His Resurrection has thus a special significance, such as that of no other could have. Abraham, or Moses, might be raised from the dead, and the possibility

of a resurrection proved; but that of the Lord brought Him into a condition where He could be His own witness, and show forth in the glory of His Person and in His acts the place given Him as the Head of the new creation.

Let us note some features of the supernatural life as now seen in the Person of the Son.

(a) It embraces the threefold elements of our humanity—body, soul, and spirit—and is immortal. It is capable of being glorified in a degree not possible to the natural life.¹

That which is to be noted here is that according to the quality and degree of life is the glory. In its highest measure, it is manifested in the Person of the Son since His Resurrection and Ascension. Then He “entered into His glory” (Luke 24: 26). Of this glory as visible, an anticipatory illustration was given on the Mount of Transfiguration. The disciples with Him “saw His glory” (Matt.

¹ “Glory” is a term used in the Scriptures in various senses—good opinion, renown, excellence; but here we are concerned with it only as applied to material things. As thus applied, its underlying idea is that of light, brightness, splendour, something eminently visible to the eye. Thus it is said that “the glory of the Lord shone round about” the shepherds (Luke 2: 9); Stephen, looking into Heaven, “saw the glory of God” (Acts 7: 55). St. Paul was blinded by the glory of the light that shone round about him (Acts 22: 11). We read of the glory that shone upon the face of Moses when he came down from the mount (Ex. 34: 29), but which, the Apostle declares, is inferior to that which shall shine in the faces of those under the ministration of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3: 7).

17: 3; 2 Peter 1: 17). Of this glory of the Head, His members at His appearing will be made partakers. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun" (Matt. 13: 43). Only the supernatural life is capable of supernatural glory. Now we have "the body of humiliation." Our "life is hid with Christ in God, but when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." "When we see Him as He is we shall be made like Him," and "the body of humiliation" will give place to "the body of glory" (Col. 3: 3; Phil. 3: 21).

(b) It is the perfect life, because through it in His Person the Godhead is most fully revealed to all reasonable beings, and thus all, being brought into the closest possible communion with the Father, attain to their highest blessedness.

(c) Those having this immortal life are capable of doing the will of God perfectly in all the offices He appoints of worship and of service, and thus may be His saints and ministers for ever.

Of the Church as partaking of the supernatural life of the Head, and of the means by which it is given to men, and is nourished, mention will be made in speaking of His work after His Resurrection. The changes in the earth adapting it to the new life will be spoken of when considering the new creation.

CHAPTER XIII

REDEMPTION AND ITS STAGES

AS man had come under the law of sin and death, it was for the Seed of the woman to deliver him (Gen. 3: 15). He as the God-man was to be brother of every man, the *Goel*, the Avenger. To Him it belonged to "bruise the serpent's head," and cast him out of the earth, and regain the inheritance Adam had lost. As already pointed out, the Son stands in a twofold personal relation to man and the earth. As the Word, He created them, and when man had sinned, He, as the Word, began the work of redemption. When the fulness of time had come, the Word was made flesh, and the redemptive work assumed a new form. In this form, it is continued until completed, when the glorified Son enters upon His work of new creation.

Redemption is thus a work intermediate between creation and new-creation, the Son being the Father's instrument in all, and from the day of the Fall, though not yet Incarnate, He took the place of the Redeemer.

The work of redemption has five stages: first,

from the fall of Adam to Abraham; secondly, the Jewish period; thirdly, the Lord's personal work upon earth; fourthly, His present work from Heaven through His Church; fifthly, His return and rule in His Kingdom, continuing till He gives up His Kingdom to His Father. Then His redemptive work, strictly speaking, will cease; but not His mediatorial, which can never cease. Although He gives up the redemptive office, its end being accomplished, He continues for ever in His offices of Priest and King.

But how could the Son, not having yet assumed human nature, but acting as the Word, carry on His redemptive work? He could not in its first stages appear in His own Person on the earth, and work miracles before the eyes of men, and so prove Himself the Redeemer. The time for this had not come. Yet, though invisible, He could act by angels and men, and through them carry out the Father's purpose. He could also manifest Himself through visible symbols. A first and indispensable step was to show men their sinfulness, their separation from God, and their need of a Mediator. To this end was the rite of sacrifice appointed at the first, and doubtless some other rites of worship were soon added.

It will be well at this point to note how God has adapted the revelations of Himself to men in the several stages of redemption, according to their progressive religious development. It is

plain from the Scripture narratives that however high the place of Adam, as the first man, in the Divine purpose, and whatever the knowledge of God given him, there is a development, intellectual and moral, which can be made through experience only; and that his descendants have been enlarging as the centuries have passed, in their comprehension of God's character, and the ways of His dealing with men. As man has a threefold constitution, body, soul, and spirit, so God's revelations have a like successive adaptation. As said by one, "All God's dealings or revelations are addressed to man as a sentient, reasonable, and spiritual creature. . . . There seems to have been a gradual development of the race: first, as a physical and sentient creature; next, as a physical or sentient, and also reasoning creature; and lastly, as a sentient, reasoning, and spiritual creature."

Accepting these three stages of development, the revelations of God will be addressed to man, first, as a sentient being. He will be instructed in a large degree through His senses. Secondly, the revelations will be addressed to him as intellectual, receiving truth through speech, and as capable of abstract reasoning. And finally, to him as spiritual, and able to discern spiritual truths. This progress from the sensible to the spiritual, through the intellectual, is the order both of individual and national development, and

it is the order of the three successive dispensations, the Patriarchial, the Jewish, and the Christian. But as man has body, soul, and spirit conjoined, God's revelations at all times embrace all these; but each has its own special period, and the higher dispensation takes into itself the lower. And it is to be noted that the Holy Spirit is in due measure active in all Divine appointments, whether addressed to body, soul, or spirit. In every stage of human history, He has been the Teacher of truth.

From this point of view, we may see in the patriarchal time animal sacrifice as the chief and fitting rite of worship. Of other Divine rites we read nothing definite, although the words "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" are generally understood as indicating a new step in the worship of God by the children of Seth (Gen. 4: 26). During the patriarchal period, no covenant distinction was made among the families and peoples, and at the end all were involved in the judgment of the Deluge.

In God's later revelation of Himself through Moses to the Hebrews as His covenant people, we see a marked advance, not only in worship, but in the knowledge of His purpose and attributes. Animal sacrifice continued to be the chief rite as pointing to the atoning sacrifice to be offered upon the cross, but with many new forms and ritual additions, each showing forth some special

relation of the offerer to God, and his duties to his fellows. To the altar of sacrifice was added the altar of incense, the symbol of prayer, and in the Most Holy Place, God was revealed in the Visible Glory between the Cherubim. But in addition to these appeals to the senses, much instruction was given through the laws and institutions of Moses, as to the character of God, and His purpose. The way was thus prepared for the higher and more spiritual revelations of the prophets, and their teachings respecting the Messiah and His Kingdom.

In God's revelations of Himself after the Son had ascended into Heaven and sent down the Holy Spirit, we find that though the senses and the intellectual faculties are appealed to, the spiritual element is predominant (1 Cor. 2: 12). Material things—water and bread and wine and oil—continue indeed to be used in worship, and truth is addressed to the intellect in the creeds and in preaching and other discourse. But higher than all, and giving life to all, is the spiritual consciousness and apprehension of Divine truth, the fruit of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, for the "Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

In considering the redemptive work as a whole, we note that every stage demanded faith, and larger faith with each new and higher stage. But even in the first, it is seen in a large degree. We

cannot here enter into details, but there are many incidental proofs that as, on the one hand, there was in the most of Adam's descendants a loss of faith, and consequent growth in wickedness, which at last brought on them the judgment of the Deluge; so, on the other hand, were there those who walked in faith, of one of whom we read that He was taken by God, apparently without passing through death (Gen. 5: 24). Noah is also spoken of as "a righteous man and perfect in his generations," the standard of perfection being the measure of excellence in one stage which prepares for the next (Gen. 6: 9). All creature perfection is relative, not absolute.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WORD AS REDEEMER

IT is generally accepted that the earliest biblical records were written a considerable period after the call of Abraham, but into this and other questions as of their authorship and authority, it is not necessary here to enter. They were written, under general Divine direction and guidance, to the end that the covenant people might have some knowledge of God's dealings with men from the beginning, especially of His dealings with Abraham, and thus learn their own place in His purpose. To this end, He makes known to them the creation of the earth and of the first man, his fall into sin and its punishment, and some leading events in the history of his descendants down to the call of Abraham. We see the gradual falling away of the sons of Adam from the truths he had taught them, the loss of the knowledge of one God, the growth of polytheism, the growing corruption of morals and worship, and the judgment of the Deluge. But these could not be written down with any fulness of detail, supposing the writers to have had full

knowledge, for if this had been done, the book would have failed to answer its end of general instruction through its very bulk. Many events in the remote past are not recorded, for a knowledge of the multifarious details of history down to the time of Abraham was not needful for the covenant people; but we are to note that much that is now obscure to us in regard to the genealogies of peoples, and their local and political relations to one another, was plain to them in the earlier centuries.¹

But the knowledge given us in Genesis of God's dealings with men in the earliest times, limited as it is, is necessary to explain His subsequent dealings. Nor was this knowledge needful for the Jews only. It is needful for all, even to the end that they may understand God's dealings in their unity, and the work of the Incarnate Son in His especial relation to man.

Considering the high place of man through his relation to the Incarnate Son, and the wondrous dealings of God with him, we may believe that his history from the beginning will have value to

¹ It is characteristic of biblical history that many things are passed over in silence which have great interest for us, an instance of which we see in the Gospels, all omitting to give any account of the Lord's life from His childhood to His entrance on His ministry; and three of them passing over in silence the events of that first year. God gives to those who write or speak of Him a spirit of wise reticence, as seen in His Son, who knew many truths which He did not speak.

all rational beings. It is not too much to hope that knowledge of the primitive age and its peoples, and of later generations down to Abraham, may yet be given us far more fully than the brevity of the biblical narratives permits; and this be effected through the records of themselves made by the chief peoples from Adam downward. It is not without a Divine purpose that these ancient records were made upon the almost imperishable clay tablets, and have been preserved in such large numbers (hundreds of thousands, it is said), and that we are now learning so fully of the social and political and religious life of the oldest peoples. Doubtless we shall learn much more from them, many historical gaps will be filled, and when these records shall be fully read, we may see the isolated events which stand like disconnected mountain peaks in the early sacred narratives, united into a connected historical whole. Already we have learned through the deciphered tablets and records of Babylon and Egypt, and of other peoples, not only the degree and character of their civilisation, but much of what most concerns us,—their religious beliefs; and are able to trace in outline the winding way from Eden to Babylon, and follow the gradual fall from primitive monotheism into polytheism and idolatry. We may, then, wait with patience till we can come to some more definite and certain results.

That we meet in this earliest period many problems, chronological, ethnological, historical, all know—problems that cannot be solved in the present state of our knowledge. But a few words may be said on the matter of time in human history in its bearing on man's development.

It is comparatively unimportant how long man has been upon the earth, and there is nothing in the biblical records which determines this. Regarding the history of our race as a moral trial, it would be highly presumptuous in us to say how long a period God would employ, whether five, or ten, or twenty thousand years, or more. It would be as long as would suffice to manifest in action all, both of good and evil, in the human heart, under all the possible conditions of life. But there are certain points to be kept in mind in judging of this period—that Adam's descendants were for a long time only few in number, that patriarchal or family government was all that could have place, that the industrial arts were but slowly developed, and that states and kingdoms with ordered systems of government and populous cities must have been of comparatively late origin. But we must guard against the error, a very common one, of looking upon primitive men as savages or barbarians. This arises from a notion that civilisation is synonymous with human progress, and is necessarily a matter of time, and may be compared to a river which,

rising in a little fountain, deepens and broadens as it runs. Primitive men must, it is said, have been uncivilised, and therefore in the lowest stages of humanity. But what is meant by civilisation? It is a complex and vague term, denoting etymologically the condition political and social of those gathered in cities. But it has no uniform and permanent form, no inherent law of progress. It is relatively to a people what dress is to the body, having certain permanent features, yet ever changing, as we see in the Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilisations. It is the best that a people can attain to in government, arts, arms, and social life.¹

Beginning with the expulsion of Adam from Eden, we enter upon the history of man as no

¹ If we go back to primitive man, we may, if we please, call him uncivilised, for the necessary conditions of civilisation are wanting; but not a savage, or a barbarian. These terms carry with them the idea of brutality, ferocity, cruelty. A savage or barbarous life is one of violence and bloodshed; but we may not associate this idea with our first parents, or with primitive man. To those who accept the animal theory of the origin of man, the earliest history of our race is buried in thick darkness, and out of that darkness we hear the howlings of the hungry beasts, and the shouts and cries of half-bestial and famished men, fighting together for their common food with tooth and claw, and club and stone. Less intellectual, with less knowledge, rude in manners and customs, as was the early man, his consciousness of God as the Supreme Lord may have been as deep, his reverence as great, his obedience as faithful as that of the most highly civilised. Barbarism is not the primitive stage, but comes later in human history. Savagery, as we meet it, is the product of

longer in unity with God and in communion with Him.¹ But the human race was not left to perish in its sinfulness—it was put under a dispensation of grace. God was pleased to give to the race a new probation.

A.—From Adam to Abraham

Turning now to the probation given to the race as fallen, we note that the great point at issue was

a long period of moral deterioration and debasement. A civilised man is not necessarily a virtuous man; indeed, a high morality hardly enters into the common estimate of civilisation, except in that form of it which we distinguish as Christian. In no other may personal morality be called an essential element, and even here it is by no means dominant. We may believe that in no part of the world does the eye of God see more to offend Him, than in the splendid cities and polished capitals of civilised Christendom.

¹ May we not apply the words of the poet to the history of our race, its native goodness, and its speedy fall?—

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy.

The youth, who daily farther from the East
Must travel, still is Nature’s Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.”

But we know that “the vision splendid” is yet to come, the vision of Him who brings with Him, not the light of common day, but the “light that never was on land or sea.”

the same as in the probation of Adam—should the will of the Creator or of the creatures prevail—obedience or disobedience. It was a personal trial; no one was condemned because inheriting a fallen nature, but because he failed to obey God so far as he knew His will, whether through His law as written in man's heart, or declared in His Commandments, or made known by inspired men. Doubtless it was not so much the manner of obedience as its spirit, and of this only God could judge. It would, therefore, be highly presumptuous in us to say what is the standard of the Divine judgment, and how many or how few in the days prior to the call of Abraham were accepted by Him; and the same is true of the uncovenanted peoples at this day. "In every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him" (Acts 10: 35, R. V.). However great the ignorance of the Divine Person and ways, if the spirit of obedience is found and righteousness is wrought, He will be gracious and forgive.

We must, then, consider the period, longer or shorter, from the fall of Adam to the call of Abraham, in the light of this probation. The Son, not yet Incarnate, but acting as the Word, began immediately the work of redemption. What was the manner of that work? It doubtless had the same general features that characterised His work after the call of Abraham.

As fitting to the infancy of the race and its

early development, we might expect that there would be a manifestation of God to man's senses. In Eden there had been a local and visible manifestation. Adam was, indeed, expelled from the Garden, but we cannot doubt that the remembrance of it as a place made holy by the tradition of the Divine Presence—a sentiment of reverence often seen later in the erection of altars—continued with the children of Adam, at least for some generations. Many commentators have thought that the angelic order of the Cherubim placed at the gate remained visible there until the Flood, and that before the gate, the pious patriarchs offered their sacrifices. This is quite in accordance with God's subsequent dealings with men, appealing to their senses, as seen in the Visible Glory in the Tabernacle and Temple, and culminating in the Word made flesh (1 John 1: 1).

How far the Son in His offices of Mediator and Redeemer was made known we may not say, but it is certain that there were in earliest times priesthood, animal sacrifices, sacred times and places, fixed rites of worship, probably tithes and first-fruits, which we must believe to have been of Divine appointment. These were doubtless more fully developed when the covenant relation was established, but were appointed at the first, or as soon as the gradual increase of numbers and moral development permitted.

Keeping in mind that the redemptive work of the Son began immediately after the Fall, and had certain elements essential and permanent, we are able to account for the many points of likeness between the worship and religious observances of the Babylonians and Egyptians or earlier peoples, and those later appointed through Moses to Israel. The redemptive work had the same character in its initial as in its last stage. Its end was the same, its teachings, and the ritual in its leading features. But the children of Adam did not desire to keep a holy God in their remembrance, and fell into many errors in their conceptions of Him and in their relations to Him. The truths known to them they perverted and corrupted, and "their foolish heart was darkened." But when His time came, He would purify these truths from error and restore His appointed rites to their original meaning and purpose. This was done chiefly through Moses. We may admit that his work was not so much the bringing out of things absolutely new, as freeing the old from their corruptions and bringing out their true meaning.

We have, therefore, to keep clearly in mind that the prehistoric period, so-called, was the first stage of the Lord's redemptive work, and that the truths then revealed, and the rites and observances appointed, were such as should prepare men for further and higher revelations. They

were not left in ignorance of the Divine purpose and of their duties. If the religions of the earliest descendants of Adam did not show in general the redemptive features just mentioned, and they appeared only in a later stage, it would present a strong objection to the belief that the Son had been acting as the Redeemer from the fall of Adam, and in the unity of His work. As "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," His sacrificial and mediatorial work was set forth to all from the first in symbols and rites.

It is admitted that great obscurity rests on the history of the earliest generations, and that there are points at present insoluble. God made Himself known to Adam in Eden, and this knowledge would be in a measure handed down from Adam to his children, to be enlarged by new theophanies and symbols, by manifestations of the Divine character in His moral government, as seen in His dealings with Cain, and through teachings by inspired men and appointed rites of worship—all being suited to man's stage of moral development.

When we study the later Babylonian and Egyptian religious records, we find a confused mingling of truth and error. There are in both many right conceptions of a Supreme Being, of His righteousness, justice, and goodness. The duty of worship is recognised, and humble confession made of man's dependence upon a God, and care shown for public morality. But there

was no recognition of one God, Creator of all, with one law, one worship. In Egypt, monotheism was swallowed up in polytheism, and polytheism led to pantheism. It is said by Professor Sayce (*Religions of Egypt and Babylonia*) that "Egyptian religion became pantheistic; the Divinity was discovered everywhere, and the shadowy and impersonal forms of the ancient deities were mingled together in hopeless confusion. . . . The gods were but the manifold forms in which the unchanging Divine essence manifested itself."

Keeping in mind the descent of all from one, we can readily picture to ourselves the early patriarchal conditions, when the families, increasing in number, began to seek out new habitations and to take possession of the lands contiguous to Eden. We have seen in our own day in the early Western pioneers, and in the mountaineers of Virginia and Kentucky, the effect which such a diffusion of population has had upon the moral and social life of the scattered ones—the growing ignorance, rudeness of manners, decay of religious belief, growth of superstition, and a general tendency to lower conditions of life. Yet the truths the patriarchal families had received, and the religious rites handed down, remained, but corrupted. As the numbers increased, small states or principalities appear, like the nomes of Egypt, gradually developing into kingdoms, as those of Sumir and Akkad, of Babylon and As-

syria, of Upper and Lower Egypt. A world-kingdom was the dream of the more ambitious, but was brought to naught through confusion of tongues. The state of things thus produced is that presented by the recent discoveries in Babylon and Egypt—truths and rites transmitted from Eden, but perverted and mingled with many errors.

In a word,—for the details of the gradual falling away cannot be here given,—moral alienation from God and spiritual separation from Him brought with it that very condition of things which the earliest records of our race make known to us—a general deterioration following upon the dispersion of Adam's descendants, and a moral progress again upward caused by the growth of kingdoms and cities. It may be that further discoveries will show us more clearly the religious character of the prehistoric times; but the more Christian truths are found in them, the stronger the evidence that the Son was then carrying on His redemptive work, making the Father and His ways known.

B.—From Abraham to Moses

Some centuries after the Flood, when men had again multiplied on the earth and cities had been built and kingdoms established, God entered upon a new stage of His redemptive work. Now He

would take a people to stand in especial relationship to Him, to whom He would give larger knowledge of Himself and of His purpose in His Son than was given to other peoples, and through ordinances appointed by Him, prepare them for His coming as the Redeemer and Messiah. Of the manner in which this was effected through the choice of Abraham and the training of his descendants, and the selection of a land for their habitation, we cannot speak in detail. After a long sojourn in Egypt, the Hebrews were led by Moses to Mount Sinai, where the covenant relation was established, and thence through the Wilderness to the Promised Land.

What knowledge of God as the one Supreme and Holy God, Infinite and Eternal, and of His moral attributes, Abraham may have had at the time of his call, we cannot say. We are told that his ancestors served other gods (Josh. 24: 2), and his own conceptions of the Deity were probably at first very imperfect. But God saw in him one who, through spiritual receptivity, would prove a fitting instrument for the work to which He called him. For this work he must be educated, and this God did by revealing Himself to him in the Person of the Son as the Word, and entering into a covenant with him (Gen. 17: 1-8). The manner in which Abraham speaks of God as the Almighty God, and the largeness of the promises of the covenant, both temporal and spiritual, and

the declaration that "all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him," show that he recognised in the God who spoke to him, the Supreme God, the Ruler over all the earth, and all nations (Gen. 17: 6). The relation of Abraham to Melchizedek, and the payment of tithes, show a definite apprehension of the priestly office, and of its high dignity. His knowledge of God, greatly enlarged by repeated theophanies, and of His purpose in His Seed (John 8: 56) was transmitted to his children, the patriarchs, and further enlarged by God's dealings with them.

During most of the period now before us, the descendants of Abraham were in Egypt. Of the ends to be attained through the long sojourn there we know little; but it will be remembered that there was much in the advanced culture of the Egyptians at that time that would tend to stimulate and instruct the less cultured Hebrews and to help them to prepare for their place as an independent people.

All who believe in a God who has a definite purpose in human history, and who knows the end from the beginning, will believe that the going down of Jacob and his children into Egypt was not undesigned, but Divinely ordered. We may then ask what was the purpose of God in it? As we know in general that His purpose was to prepare a people to be "a kingdom of priests and

a holy nation," we may believe that the long abode in Egypt had a bearing upon this. It was a means to aid in preparing them for their future service. But the information we possess of this period is very scanty, both of the religious condition of the Hebrews themselves and of their relations to the Egyptians. Carrying with them the knowledge, handed down from Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, of God as One and Supreme, and of His covenant relations to them, the consciousness of their high place and calling may have been developed and strengthened. Their close contact with the Egyptian polytheism and its animal worship would tend to make more real to them the truths they held of the Divine unity, and of the sacredness of His worship.

The Hebrews were also so far separated from the Egyptians that they were not exposed to the religious temptations which social equality and familiar intercourse would have brought with them. It is said by Professor Sayce (*The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*): "Their numbers were comparatively insignificant, their social standing obscure. They were doubtless as much despised and avoided by the Egyptians of their day as similar Bedouin tribes are by the Egyptians of the present day. . . . They lived apart from the natives of the country."

This separation would tend to prepare them for their later isolation when fulfilling their calling—

a people not known among the nations (Ex. 33: 16).

The promises of God to Abraham in regard to the possession of the land of Canaan were remembered and acted upon by his descendants in the burial there of the patriarchs, thus showing their faith (Gen. 25: 9; 49: 29; 50: 13). It may be that they had traditional remembrances of the intercession of Abraham for the cities of the plain (Gen. 18: 23), and may have recognised in this a prefiguration of their own high calling. The spirit of prophecy was not wanting, as we see in the utterances of Jacob respecting the future of his sons (Gen. 49). It is likely that we very much underestimate the knowledge which Abraham and his children possessed of the purpose of God in calling them into special relations to Himself.

Whilst readily admitting that the Hebrews learned much from the Egyptians, especially as to the industrial arts, we must note that they rejected some of their most generally accepted beliefs. An instance of this is seen in their belief in the life after death. It will be remembered that no nation of antiquity had so definite conceptions of a future life, especially as to a judgment immediately after death, when rewards and punishments were to be meted to the good and evil. But with this belief were connected many errors—the transmigration of the soul into animal bodies for purification, the annihilation of some,

and the final absorption of the good into the Divine essence. The embalming of the body is believed by many Egyptologists to show a belief in a future bodily resurrection, but not till after a period of three thousand years in the disembodied state.

If to the Egyptians a life after death, with rewards and punishments, was so familiar, it may be asked why so little is said of this future life in the Old Testament. It could not have been from ignorance, it must have been intentional. The answer is simple. God would not have His people look to death, but to life in the Messianic Kingdom. Not a dismembered and, therefore, imperfect, but a perfected immortal humanity was before Him in the constitution of man. Death was His punishment of sin and, therefore, abhorrent to the Living God; and this is everywhere emphasized in the Mosaic ritual and in the Law. Beside this, the obscurity of Hades opened the way to all kinds of speculation as to the condition of the dead. From all errors of this kind God would keep His people free, not as ignoring the life after death, for this is everywhere assumed, but of its nature in detail. As has been said, "a long life with the Egyptians was one preparation for death"; with the Hebrews it was waiting for the Messianic Kingdom; with the Christian it is preparation for Christ's return and life in the heavenly Jerusalem.

C.—From Moses to the Monarchy

Being brought by Moses under Divine direction from Egypt to Mt. Sinai, a solemn covenant was made between the people and Jehovah. They should be a peculiar people unto Him above all the nations that were upon the earth (Deut. 14: 2). But the condition of their election was their obedience. Having promised obedience, "all that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient" (Ex. 19: 5; 24: 7), the Ten Commandments were spoken, sacrifices offered, and the people cleansed by the sprinkling of the blood (Ex. 24: 8).

The covenant being thus concluded, God through Moses gave command that the people make Him a sanctuary that He may dwell among them (Ex. 25: 8). This dwelling among them involved some sensible manifestation or symbol of His Presence. This symbol was the Glory above the mercy-seat between the cherubim. "There I will meet with the children of Israel, and the Tabernacle shall be sanctified by My Glory" (Ex. 29: 43). That part of the sanctuary in which He manifested His Presence was the Holy of Holies.

This Glory, or to use the Hebrew term, the Shekinah, is to be distinguished from the pillars of cloud and fire which went before the people when God brought them out of Egypt, and

which were visible to all (Ex. 13: 21). This appears also from the words, "The Glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud," but as something distinct from it, and from the pillar of fire (Ex. 16: 10; Lev. 16: 2).

We need not suppose that this Glory was continually visible in the Most Holy Place, since it was entered but once a year, by the High Priest only, who then burned the incense before the Lord, "that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat . . . that he die not" (Lev. 16: 13). The Glory in the Tabernacle was, we may believe, the same which was manifested in the Person of the Son on the Mount of Transfiguration, an ineffable "brightness," not to be identified with created or terrestrial light. The light that then made the Lord's face to shine as the sun was not a reflection of the bright clouds which later overshadowed them (Matt. 17: 1-8). As the Lord after His Resurrection appeared to His disciples only at intervals, so the Visible Glory may have been seen in the Most Holy only at certain appointed times.

This dwelling of God, in the Person of the Son, in His sanctuary is always to be understood and kept in mind as a reality, in considering the history of Israel (Ex. 25: 8). It was, as we shall see, His visible Presence that was the condition of the fulfilment of the promise to the nation of its high calling; and when He forsook His

sanctuary, and it was no longer sanctified by His Presence, the hour of its destruction could not be far distant.¹

There are several points of view from which the covenant of God with the Hebrews may be regarded. That which first presents itself to us is the Divine purpose in their election. This, as has been said, was in general that He might prepare a people to receive His Son when in the fulness of time He should be born of the Virgin, and that in them under His rule all nations might be blessed. But they had a special present mission. He called them to be "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation," and this not in the future, but in the present (Ex. 19: 6). Thus the covenant people occupied from the first a high

¹ It will be well at this point to bring together the accounts of the entry of the Visible Glory into the Sanctuary.

When Moses had completed his work, we are told that the Glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle, and Moses was not able to enter into it because the cloud abode thereon (Ex. 40: 34; Num. 9: 15). When the Temple was built, the Lord gave the same sign of His dwelling in it as before in the Tabernacle: "And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the Holy Place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the Glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 8: 10, 11).

Of the return of the Glory to the new Temple it is said: "The Glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. . . . And behold the Glory of the Lord filled the house" (Ezek., 43: 2, 5).

Of the departure of the Glory from the first Temple mention will be made later.

and unique position—to be the mediator of His grace to all other peoples. For this high spiritual office they must be prepared by special ordinances of His own appointment. The high place given to their priesthood makes a brief examination of its nature necessary.

Priesthood in its principle was not something new. It had existed among all the early peoples. The Babylonians and the Egyptians had priests (Gen. 47: 26). Mention is made of Melchizedek, “a priest of the Most High God,” of Jethro, as “a priest of Midian,” the patriarchs were priests in their own households (Job 1:5). How far priests constituted a distinct class among the Hebrews before the covenant is in doubt. The sense of sin and defilement, and consequent unworthiness to approach God, and, therefore, the need of some mediatorship, which is the basis of priesthood, has been seen in every stage of human history, beginning with Adam (Gen. 3: 8). But priesthood as developed by Moses took on itself a peculiar character, both as regards the classes into which the priests were divided, the place given them in the national life, and the duties assigned them. But priesthood was not confined to the priests (Num. 16: 3). The whole nation was a priestly nation of which circumcision was the sign, but all who performed distinctively priestly functions were chosen by God (Ex. 28: 41; Num. 18).

We may now ask how the people could be

prepared for their priestly calling. Of the special relation of the priests to the Hebrew worshippers it is not necessary here to speak in detail. Those acting as mediators between men and the Holy God must themselves be holy, not in the ceremonial sense only, but in heart and truth. "I am holy, be ye also holy." How could this holiness be effected? In the Mosaic ritual, all consists of certain external acts—slaying of animals, sprinkling of blood, burning of flesh, offering of incense. Could the use of these rites make the worshippers spiritual, or have any ethical value? Many have denied this, and some have affirmed that the whole ritual is anti-spiritual, and not of Divine appointment. But this is to import into man's religious constitution a dualism between the sensible and the spiritual which does not exist. The outward act, no less than the spoken word, is the expression of the inward feeling, and in its expression it intensifies that feeling. He who, feeling himself a sinner, brought the victim to be slain as a substitute for himself, could not but have his sense of sin deepened in this act, and could not but realise in the sprinkling of the cleansing blood the peace of sin forgiven. Though in itself "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins," yet as pointing to the blood to be shed on Calvary, it had by Divine grace a present cleansing power. The Law was a shadow of good things to come,

and could not make perfect, but its forms were not empty and idle. The sincere worshipper, though ignorant of the purpose of God in His Son, did receive spiritual grace through the ordinances appointed, for in all these was the Spirit of Christ. No other proof of this is needed than the holy lives of many who lived under the Law (Heb. 10), and the utterances in the Psalms.

It was thus through rites of worship and not through words addressed to the intellect, or abstract principles, that the Hebrew people were to be prepared for their priestly duties. In the order of these rites, they are taught the Divine purpose to be realised in the Incarnate Son. Through the two altars—burnt offering and incense—were prefigured the great facts of Atonement and Intercession. These, indeed, could not be realised till the Messiah came, who should offer Himself as the whole burnt offering—the Lamb without blemish or spot—upon the altar of sacrifice; and then entering within the veil burn the incense upon the golden altar. To both these duties as prophetic types were the covenant people called, and thus taught their meaning. They must first offer themselves upon the altar of sacrifice, confessing their sins, and giving themselves unreservedly to do His will—a whole burnt offering. Cleansed by the sprinkling of the blood, they could then enter upon their office of prayer and intercession.

Such being the Divine way in which God would educate His people for their high calling, we cannot wonder that the building of the sanctuary in which He would dwell and be worshipped could not be left to human wisdom and skill, but must be made after a pattern shown to Moses in the Mount (Ex. 25 : 9, 40). Students of the Tabernacle have found depths of meaning in its threefold division, and in the furniture of each, and also in the various materials used; but of these we have no space to speak. Its threefoldness—Outer court, Holy and Most Holy places—was employed by Luther, and by many, as showing our trichotomy or threefold constitution, body, soul, and spirit; and by others as showing the respective works of the Trinity in man's redemption.

Of the place of the prophet in the work of redemption, some things have already been said. That there were those making known the mind of God from Eden downward, we cannot doubt, but they had a more important part in the education of the covenant people. Abraham is called a prophet, and there were prophetic utterances through Isaac and Jacob, but not till the time of Samuel, himself recognised by all Israel as a prophet of the Lord, do we read of "the schools of the prophets" (1 Sam. 3 : 20). Into the constitution of these schools we are not called to enter, but all will readily understand that in

uttering the prophetic word, two things were needed: a knowledge of the covenant relation of God to His people, that the prophetic words might be in harmony with it; and such spiritual discernment and self-control on the part of the prophet as to enable him clearly to distinguish his own thoughts from the suggestions of the Spirit, and to speak only what was given him to speak. It was not enough that prophetic gifts were possessed. There was much room for instruction as to their right exercise, and this, we may believe, was given in the schools. A great point to be guarded against was the prophesying out of the prophet's own heart.

It is to be kept in mind that foretelling the future was but a small part of the prophet's work. God gives from time to time, as He sees fit, the knowledge of what He is about to do, that His people may be co-workers with Him; but the larger work of the prophets was to enforce upon the people the keeping of their covenant. Having spiritual discernment, they were able to see all failures, whether of the kings, the priests, or the people, to fulfil the covenant obligations. They could call all to repentance, and warn of coming judgments. As the spirit of disobedience spread more and more, and His authority was more despised, the more earnest was God to warn them through His prophets. "I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and

sending them, but ye would not hear" (Jer. 29: 19). We cannot but remember, the pleadings of the Son,—His words spoken at Jerusalem, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not!" (Luke 13: 34).

We are told that false prophets were very numerous in the last days of Israel and had great influence over both priests and people. Of the prophets of Baal, we need not here speak. That they were numerous we know (1 Kings 18: 19), but we are to note that of those prophesying in the name of Jehovah there were two classes—those sent by Him, and speaking His word, and those not sent by Him, who prophesied out of their own hearts. Between these two classes, there was all along during the monarchy an earnest contest which was consummated at the destruction of Jerusalem. Of these two classes. Jeremiah and Hananiah were representatives, The point at issue was, "Will God give up the Holy City into the hands of the enemy?" The false prophet, not discerning the sins of the people, but planting himself upon the covenant relation, said, "No, God will never forsake His Temple or give it to destruction." The true prophet, having spiritual discernment of the sins of the people, prophesied its overthrow (Jer. 28). They had not kept the covenant, they

had dishonoured Jehovah, they had not harkened to His warnings; therefore, the house of God should be like Shiloh, desolate and without inhabitants (Jer. 26: 6).

Having discernment of the purpose of God in the election of the covenant people, the prophets could discern the sins, in all their changing forms, that hindered its accomplishment. Obedience to the Law of God as given to Moses and the fulfilment of covenant obligations was the great burden of their prophecies.

It is one of the strange fancies of our most advanced criticism that the prophet should be put in order of time before the Law. It would seem that any thoughtful reader of the earliest prophets, Hosea and Amos, must see how full they are of references to the covenant and to the Law. They are not uttering truths wholly new, they assume an authoritative standard of life and conduct as already existing, to which they urge the people to conform. By this standard, their own utterances are to be judged, and their great work was to call the people to its observance.

The error that meets us here is in the belief that God in the religious education of men gave them only some fundamental principles and moral precepts, and left these to gradual development into such practical form as circumstances might determine. On the contrary, God gave to men from the first certain fixed laws, definite institu-

tions, appointed rites of worship, that under them they might learn His way and be prepared for the next stage in His purpose. This is true in the highest measure of His covenant people. Had the Jews rightly used the Law and the Mosaic ritual, God would still have taught them by His prophets, unfolding their spiritual significance and leading onward to further knowledge; but if, as was the case, the Law and the ritual were not rightly used, then was the voice of God heard through the prophets, reproving, warning, and threatening them with His sore judgments.

Of the general meaning of animal sacrifice something has been said. Various forms of it were appointed to the Jews, some for individual sins, some for national sins; but we are now most concerned with the daily morning and evening service, which best represents the nation's priestly office. The brazen altar first meets the eye on entering the outer court. Every day, through its priests, the nation first dedicates itself to God in sacrificial rites, and proceeds to its duty of intercession. Doubtless the sacrifice upon its brazen altar had its application to other nations as a confession of the universal sinfulness, but it was in the offering of the incense upon the golden altar, the symbol of prayer, that the priestly office in its relations to other peoples most clearly appears. No words indeed were

spoken at the golden altar, only the cloud of incense told to God the desires of His people. It was a silent language, an unspoken prayer, but as full of meaning to the Divine ear as if embodied in a thousand words.¹

Although the words "Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Is. 56: 7) may have reference chiefly to the future, when the Jews shall be set again in their place (Zech. 14: 16), yet it is clear that the offering of the incense in the Divine Presence embraced in its scope the people of every land. In Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple, He speaks of the stranger coming from afar to pray, and of the supplications to be offered to God as present in His house, that by His answers to them "all the peoples of the earth may know that this house which I have built is called by Thy name" (1 Kings 8: 41). The Temple at Jerusalem, where God had manifested His Presence, thus became the great central place of worship for all nations, and the sacrifices and prayers there offered by His people served for the blessing of all, though they knew it not.

Supposing the Hebrews to have been spiritually prepared to fulfil their priestly calling, we ask,

¹ It is to be remarked that the incense burned upon the golden altar was made of four ingredients (Ex. 30: 34), reminding us of the apostle's words: "Supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings" (1 Tim. 2: 1).

How could this calling be made known to the peoples around them? They were to dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations (Num. 23: 9), yet as a nation having a defined territory they could not be wholly hidden away. The question therefore arises: How could their distinctive position be made known? It must be through the dwelling of God in their land and the visible blessings upon it, distinguishing it from all other lands of the earth. It was necessary to the fulfilment of their priestly calling that their worship should go on without hindrance from external enemies, or through domestic calamities. Therefore, God gave to the people a special exemption from hostile invasion. No enemy should invade their land, or if there was an invasion, the invaders should be speedily and triumphantly driven back. The rains should always fall in due seasons, the earth supply abundant food, neither famine, nor war, nor pestilence should have place in the land, their cattle should be fruitful, and the people increase greatly, and be in numbers like the dust of the earth (Lev. 26: 3-13).

We may not suppose that the Holy Land was delivered from that state of Unnature into which the whole earth had come, but that certain physical blessings were promised to its inhabitants as a reward of their faith and obedience, through which only could they be realised. If they walked like other nations in disobedience

and wickedness, their land would be like other lands, their enemies would invade it and conquer it, there would be famines and pestilences and all those forms of judgment whereby God signified His displeasure (Deut. 28).

Beholding a land so favoured and blessed in its physical features, all the adjacent nations would know that the Hebrews were under Jehovah's special protection and care, and, if themselves polytheists, be led to ask, "Who is Jehovah? Is He not the one Supreme God?" And if to these visible proofs of Divine favour we add the internal administration of a nation distinguished by its righteousness,—its inhabitants dwelling together as brethren, and in its relations to other nations just and peaceable,—we see what a mighty witness to Jehovah the Hebrew commonwealth might have been to all the peoples of the earth.

D. From the Monarchy to the Captivity

The Tabernacle, a movable tent, was for the Wilderness period; but when the Promised Land was reached and possessed it must be set up in some permanent place. This place was Shiloh, near the centre of the land, and here it remained many years (Josh. 18: 1). The appointed worship seems to have been regularly carried on, but during the priesthood of Eli the ark, taken by his sons as a talisman to insure

victory against the Philistines, fell into their hands, and after various changes from city to city, was returned to Israel, and placed by David in a tabernacle which he had pitched on Mount Zion. After the Temple was built the ark was brought and placed in the Most Holy Place (Ps. 132: 8). All this period was one of great political confusion and strife, and there were many and great irregularities in worship—violations of the Mosaic ritual. It was also a time of great corruption of morals, which, as we see from the examples of the sons of Eli and of Samuel, affected the priesthood also.

As the building of the Temple followed soon after the setting up of the Monarchy, we must note the ground on which the Commonwealth gave place to the Monarchy.

The demand of the people for a king, that they might be like the nations around them, was very displeasing to God as a distinct rejection of His theocratic rule (1 Samuel 8: 7; 10: 19). He had chosen them to stand in a peculiar relation to Himself, a relation of the highest honour and blessing, and under Him as their King the tribes became one people.

But this theocratic relation to them did not affect their tribal organisation as a commonwealth. They had no earthly king, no royal family, but each tribe had its prince, hereditary or elective, besides heads of families, and others performing

some civil duties. The tribes possessed each a partial independence, which they often exercised, but they generally acted together as a political community. Under Jehovah as their Supreme Ruler, the tribes were united, but His commands were carried out by their own local officers. With the establishment of the earthly Monarchy, the high position of the tribal princes was injuriously affected, and little is said of them in the subsequent history.

It is obvious that such a change from a Commonwealth to a Monarchy was a great one, and must affect the national life both in its religious and secular features.¹

The religious condition of the future depended much upon the character of the monarch. He might become a despot, and if himself disobedient to God's laws, he might be a most effective agent to lead the nation into idolatry and all wickedness.

¹ The twelvefold tribal division, having its immediate origin in the twelve patriarchs, seems to have a place given it, both in Jewish and Christian history, which indicates a deeper root than numerical symbolism. Jacob tells of the future of the twelve tribes (Gen. 49), and tribal contests play a large part in the biblical historical annals. Ezekiel sees in a vision a new division of the land, but still twelvefold (Ezek. 47: 13, 21). That it will reappear when the Jews shall be restored to their land is a fair inference from the Lord's words to the Apostles that "in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19: 28; Acts 26: 7).

It was possible, on the other hand, that he might be a faithful servant of God and uphold His authority, even against the will of the people.

Unmindful of their high calling, the Hebrews would take their place among the peoples around them. The evils which their disobedience in the past and want of faith had brought upon them, the disorders and bloody quarrels under the Judges, their subjection to the Philistines, and consequent miseries, they ascribed to the imperfections of the theocratic rule. They saw not God's punitive hand in their afflictions, but believed that a king would deliver them, and heeded not God's warning words to Samuel (1 Sam. 8: 10).

The evils which Samuel had foretold would follow the institution of the Monarchy, early came upon them. Solomon, forgetful of his duties to God, brought strange gods into the Holy City, and erected temples for their worship. The arbitrary rule of his son, Rehoboam, led to the division of the kingdom, and under Jeroboam, leader of the ten tribes, new places of worship were established at Bethel and Dan within the territory of Israel. The appointed services in the Temple of Jerusalem continued, but united prayer could no longer be offered. The covenant people in both kingdoms became more and more like the peoples around them, and their distinctive position as a kingdom of

priests faded more and more from the national consciousness.

The building of the Temple followed soon after the setting up of the Monarchy. It does not appear that God at any time gave direction that it be built, the people being in no condition, as was shown by the wickedness at Shiloh, to take a step forward toward a higher worship (2 Sam. 7: 5, 7; Jer. 7: 12). When, through Divine direction, David had made Jerusalem the capital of his kingdom, it was an obvious thought that it be made also the religious centre, a holy city. This was acceptable to God (Ps. 132: 13). But David having been a man of war, the actual building of the Temple was reserved to his son Solomon, the prince of peace (1 Kings 8: 18).¹

The general construction of the Temple was the same as that of the Tabernacle—the same threefold divisions,—but doubled in its dimensions. When completed, and the ark which had been in the Tabernacle built by David had been placed in it, it was solemnly consecrated by King Solomon (1 Kings 8:). As at the consecration of the Tabernacle, so now “the cloud filled the house of the Lord . . . the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.”

¹ It is scarcely possible to avoid seeing in this relation of David to Solomon a prophetic type of the twofold stage of the Lord's future work, first, as the Man of War (Rev. 19: 11), then, all enemies being subdued, reigning as the Prince of Peace (Zech. 6: 12, 13).

In his prayer, Solomon makes distinct recognition both of the omnipresence of God, and of His local presence. "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have builded!" Yet toward this house should their prayers be addressed. "Hearken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant, and of Thy people Israel, when they shall pray towards this place: and hear Thou in Heaven Thy dwelling-place." A special Presence of God in the Most Holy was not inconsistent with His universal presence, and, therefore, supplication should be made by His people toward the place where He had set His name (Deut. 12: 11).

There are questions connected with the relations of the kings to the priests in matters of ritual which it is not necessary for us to consider. It is plain that some of the kings attempted to perform sacred rites which belonged only to the priests. The whole period of the Monarchy, as that of the Judges preceding it, was one of great confusion; neither kings nor priests keeping within their prescribed borders. Into the history of the two kingdoms we cannot farther enter. But the biblical records show us that the people were more and more infected with the superstitions and idolatries of the nations around them and the will of God, as declared by the

prophets, was less and less regarded. There were in Judah some God-fearing kings who fought against the spirit of disobedience, and endeavoured to reform the more glaring abuses, but their efforts were of little avail, their reforms were transient. False prophets abounded, and their predictions found general credence. The true prophets were despised and maltreated, and even put to death. The patience of God was at last exhausted. He would no longer spare. He would forsake His Holy Temple, and give it into the hands of His enemies, not for a brief interval only, as He had done for a warning and a punishment, yet not for ever. He would return to it, but not till the Incarnate Son should rebuild it when He had gathered again His twelve tribes from their long dispersion.

Of the departure of the Glory from the Temple before its destruction, we have only the vision of Ezekiel. A captive in Babylon, he was "brought in the visions of God to Jerusalem . . . and behold the Glory of the God of Israel was there" (Ezek. 8: 3, 4). When those who were to execute God's judgment upon His unfaithful people entered, and stood by the brazen altar, the Glory had gone up to the threshold of the house, and from thence to the East Gate, and the Glory of the Lord stood over the cherubim, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's Glory. "And the Glory of the Lord went up from the

midst of the city and stood upon the mountain which was on the east side of the city"—the present Mount of Olives (Ezek. 11: 23).

The departure of the Visible Glory from the Temple as seen in vision by the prophet Ezekiel, followed by its destruction, was the great turning-point in the history of the Hebrews. Their special priestly calling now came to its end, although the Temple was rebuilt. They could no more stand in their place among the nations as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," and offer the worship God had appointed. The two altars might be replaced, and the blood be sprinkled, and the smoke of the incense ascend, but the Most Holy Place was empty. Only as God dwelt between the cherubim over the mercy seat, was the sanctuary and all its rites made holy. And as the land in which His people dwelt was His, only as they were faithful and obedient would He protect them from all their enemies, and make it possible for them to fulfil their priestly functions.

E. From the Captivity to the Incarnation

Notwithstanding the failure of the people to fulfil their calling, God did not cease to be their covenant God. His purpose in them was not yet fulfilled. To them would He send His Son, for He had a work for them to do under Him

after His return in Glory. For this, He would preserve them as a people, though He scattered them among the nations. The kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians (722 B.C.) and the people carried into other lands, but the kingdom of Judah remained till its final conquest by the Chaldeans (588 B.C.).

After the destruction of Solomon's Temple, no place of worship existed till the foundation of a new temple was laid by Zerubbabel coming from Babylon, with the help of Jeshua, the high priest. First was builded the altar of sacrifice, and upon it they offered burnt offerings daily and at the feasts. But for sixteen years the work of rebuilding languished, till, aroused by the words of Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets, it was resumed with earnestness, and the temple finished and dedicated. Of the worship for the next sixty years we have little knowledge. Another step was taken when Ezra, the scribe from Babylon, came and with him a small company of priests and Levites (457 B.C.). He had in view a reformation of the abuses prevailing at Jerusalem, and to enforce obedience to the Divine Law. Of his work we have only brief mention, and we next hear of him as being, some thirteen years later, with Nehemiah at Jerusalem. But the reforms he had effected were not permanent, and the work of reformation was taken up anew by Nehemiah (444 B.C.). By him the walls of the city were rebuilt. The low con-

dition of the Jews at this time, politically and morally, and their comparative indifference to the Divine Law, is seen in the accounts given us in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and need not be dwelt upon here.

It is to be noted that the Temple was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes (170 B.C.), but afterwards cleansed and reconsecrated by one of the Maccabees. This Temple was rebuilt by Herod with great splendour, and was the Temple in which the Lord worshipped. The worship offered in it was necessarily very far short of that appointed by God. It is said by Edersheim (*The Temple*):

Confessedly, the real elements of temple-glory no longer existed. The Holy of Holies was quite empty. The ark of the covenant under the cherubim, the tables of the law, the book of the covenant, Aaron's rod that budded, and the pot of manna, were no longer in the sanctuary. The fire that had descended from Heaven upon the altar was extinguished. What was far more solemn, the visible presence of God, the Shekinah, was wanting, nor could the will of God be now ascertained through the Urim and Thummim.

It is necessary in order to estimate rightly the religious life of this period, to keep clearly in mind God's purpose in His covenant people, as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Two

things have been mentioned as essential to the fulfilment of this purpose—the dwelling of God in His sanctuary, and national independence. Both were now lost. When the Visible Glory departed from above the mercy seat, the priestly work of the nation came to its end. It was the turning-point in the religious history of the Hebrews. So long as God dwelt between the cherubim, “the temple was sanctified by His Glory.” But of the greatness of their loss, and consequent inability to fulfil their calling, they seemed to have little conception. There was no true sense of the national sin, as causing His departure, though in Ezra (9: 5) we find a humble confession of it, and also in Nehemiah (9: 26–37). But all the subsequent history shows how little the people at large thought of their priestly calling, or of the conditions necessary to its fulfilment. In His last words to them by the prophet Malachi, and especially in those to the priests, God declares that He was not honoured or feared: “If then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?” (Mal. 1: 6; 2: 8). The priests did not give glory unto His name. They were self-seeking, offering cheap and unworthy offerings, the people neglected the payment of their tithes, and His worship was a weariness.

The effect of the loss of national independence was seen in the position of dependence in which

the priests were placed, and especially the high priest, upon their heathen rulers. The office of high priest was by Divine appointment hereditary, but during this period it was frequently obtained by ambitious priests through bribery or crime, or was bestowed by the civil ruler from personal friendship or for political ends. There were also frequent changes. These causes combined to make the office of the high priest of small moral influence, although great care was taken by the priesthood to observe all ritualistic details. All the tendencies of the time were to make the priests venal and worldly, although doubtless, as we see in the case of Zechariah (Luke 1 : 6), there were some walking in all the ordinances of God, blameless.

Among the things wanting in the second Temple, which were seen in the first, the Rabbis mention the holy fire and the Spirit of Prophecy. The holy fire, to be kept ever burning on the brazen altar to consume the sacrifice, was, as has been said, the symbol of the Holy Spirit, through whom only could the worshipper offer himself acceptably to God. After He had left His Temple, God encouraged His people, by prophets, to rebuild it, but later the voice of the Holy Ghost was not heard. The Most Holy being empty, and the Holy Ghost silent, the worship took upon itself a formal character; and while, doubtless, there were many sincere worshippers whose

sacrifices were acceptable to Him, the deep sense of sin and its humble confession were wanting, and that perfect consecration which He sought, and which was typified in the whole burnt-offering, was not rendered.

We may not believe that the loss of the holy fire made the sacrifices upon the brazen altar wholly unacceptable to God, for He in His grace accepts the imperfect service when sincerely offered; but the absence of the symbol was a sign that the Holy Spirit was grieved, and could not put forth His full cleansing and enlightening power. He could no more lift up His warning voice to show the people their sins, and call them to repentance, or to make known the purposes of God. The result was inevitable. Judging themselves only by a silent book, and this often misunderstood and perverted through their traditions, they could never learn their true religious condition. This could be made known to them only through immediate prophetic utterance.

When the Holy Spirit ceased to speak and declare the mind of God, and His judgment of their religious condition, the spirit of self-righteousness was more and more manifested. The living voice of the Spirit unheard, they were forced to go back and learn from their study of the Law and the prophets and the historical books, what was His rule for their present conduct. Here a wide field of doubt and discussion was opened.

Questions of interpretation arose, schools of theology began to appear, self-appointed religious teachers were more and more numerous and prominent. Scribes, lawyers, Pharisees, Sadducees, confused the popular mind by their disputes. All, indeed, would honour the Law, but they must be its interpreters. There being no one to give an authoritative interpretation, the opinions of the learned, of the Scribes and Rabbis, became authoritative, and were carefully preserved and handed down. Many traditional observances were added to those prescribed in the Law and regarded as of almost equal validity.

To show the impossibility of carrying out the prescribed worship which necessarily followed the departure of God from the Most Holy, we will take the rites of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16). It was a day in which atonement should be made for all, both priests and people, to cleanse them from all their sins (Lev. 16: 30 Num. 29: 7)—the only day in the year appointed for humiliation and fasting. Upon its observance, a special emphasis was laid: "It shall be a statute for ever unto you." "It is a sabbath of solemn rest," and whosoever "did not afflict his soul, should be cut off from among the people." On this day only did the High Priest enter the Holy of Holies and burn incense before the Lord, and when the cloud covered the mercy-seat, he sprinkled the atoning blood upon it seven times. This having been

done in the Holiest, the blood was taken to the altar of incense and sprinkled upon it, and put on its four horns, and afterward on those of the brazen altar. Thus all parts of the sanctuary were annually cleansed from the uncleannesses of the worshippers, and hallowed, and the worship made acceptable to God.

When, therefore, the rites of this Day of Atonement could not be carried out, when there was in the Most Holy no ark, and no mercy-seat upon which the blood could be sprinkled, only a stone substituted for it, and no cloud of incense arose to cover it, we see that a most important and indeed essential part of the ritual was wanting. And we may not call this a mere ceremonial defect. It touched the very heart of the worship. In their holiest services, the priestly people fell far short of the holiness which God sought in His worshippers, and of this the Day of Atonement should keep them in continued remembrance. All must then humble themselves and confess their sins, priest and people alike, and must be cleansed from their defilement by the sprinkling of the blood of the greater sin-offering; and only as this was done, could their worship be accepted. The due observance, if possible, of the other rites of the day was not sufficient. The Most Holy being empty, the worship lost its spiritual vitality, and there was, therefore, in the post-exilic time, a growing unconsciousness of their sinfulness,

and of their inability to fulfil their priestly calling. Pride took the place of humility. They were the children of the covenant, though they kept it not.

This feeling of complacency and of self-righteousness was due in great measure to the fact that the Divine Lawgiver was no longer with them to make known His will and to show to them, through the priest or the prophet, their continual disobedience. They were, therefore, forced to go back to His commandments earlier given whose authority they recognised, and to make them the rule of their conduct. But of these commandments, their meaning and scope, they themselves were the interpreters and judges. Having no present lawgiver, a hedge of human additions was gradually built around the written Law. There was added to it a multitude of traditional observances, and by their traditions they made it void (Mark 7: 3). But this was not their intent. They would honour it in the letter, even to the smallest details. Thus the highest type of piety was the rigid observance of the Law, and of their traditions. The legalistic spirit as seen in the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin, and in washings and fastings, was almost universal. These they did, but left undone "judgment, and mercy, and faith." This legalism found its truest and highest representatives in the Pharisees.

We thus see how, in the absence of God from His sanctuary, and the cessation of prophetic

utterance, the legalistic spirit was developed, both in priests and people, and with it the spirit of self-righteousness. Men, judging their moral conduct by a book, will always justify themselves (Luke 16: 15). He must speak whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and whose "word is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword . . . and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4: 12, R. V.). Having only a book to judge them, its plainest precepts could be explained away, and the guilty stand guiltless at its bar.

Thus the condition of spiritual blindness, or, as we may term it, of unconscious hypocrisy, became one of the most marked features of the religious life of this period, and was especially manifested in the Lord's day. The Jews in their relations to God believed themselves to be what they were not. How often the Lord speaks of the Scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites all know, but we cannot well believe that in thus speaking of them He affirmed that all were conscious hypocrites, deliberate dissemblers and liars, pretending to be what they knew they were not. They were scrupulous in their observance of many of the legal precepts, and paid tithes of mint, anise, and cummin. It is not denied that there were some, or perhaps many, conscious hypocrites, but the great body of the people were relying on their covenant relation, and did not think it possible that they

were not fulfilling, in a manner pleasing to Jehovah, their covenant duties. Of this unconscious hypocrisy, something will be said later.

This unconsciousness of any departure from God's ways, and of any failure in themselves, was seen most distinctly in the Pharisees and Scribes. In their own eyes, they were the especial favourites of Jehovah, and the guardians of His Law, for they honoured it by its strictest observance and kept themselves from personal defilement by avoiding all intercourse with "publicans and sinners" (Matt. 9: 11; Luke 5: 30; 15: 2). Both the Pharisees and Scribes, sitting in judgment upon themselves, had an exalted opinion of their piety, and were angry at the severity of the Lord's reproofs. The Scribes were the copyists of the Law, and gradually became its commentators and interpreters, and their teachings had great influence over the popular mind. As having knowledge of the Law, they were honoured, and their word heard as if almost inspired.

It is plain that among these self-appointed teachers there would be diversities of individual judgment, and, consequently, differing religious schools and parties. These often differed only upon very minute points, but few or none felt the need of any living authority to decide their controversies. They sat in Moses' seat; to them it belonged to judge his words. Nor did the Scribes question their competency to prepare the

people for the Messianic kingdom, nor the Pharisees doubt that they were all ready for it. There was no true mourning for the absence of the Spirit of prophecy. The abuses which the Lord so severely condemned in the cleansing of the Temple, they did not see. The spiritual blindness of which Malachi spoke, and the consequent evils, had become more manifest as the years went by.

Still another proof of the Jewish unconsciousness of any loss through the departure of the Visible Glory, is seen in the synagogue and its services. Doubtless the end originally proposed in the establishment of the synagogue was good. So long as the exile continued, and there could be no worship in the Temple, the gathering of the exiles in small companies in the various places of their captivity, to read the Scriptures and to pray, helped to preserve them from idolatry, and to strengthen the consciousness of their covenant calling. And this may be said, also, of the Jews of the Dispersion after the Temple was rebuilt. But the synagogue was no part of the Divine appointment, and is not mentioned in the historical books, or in the prophets. The existence of Temple and synagogue side by side in later times, and the services in both attended by the same persons (it is said that in Jerusalem alone there were more than four hundred synagogues), shows that the place of the old ritual was passing away, and that a need was felt of something to develop

more fully the religious life under its new conditions. In the Temple service was no regular teaching, but in contrast with this, the fundamental idea of the synagogue was teaching or instruction. There were, indeed, some elements of worship—prayers, reading of the Scripture lessons, and singing of Psalms. But its chief attractive power was that it served as a place where the teachers of new ideas could present them, and strangers make addresses and comment on the lessons read. The constant use made of it by the Lord, and later by the apostles, is well known, though the Lord also taught often in the Temple (Matt. 4: 23; Acts 13: 5). He may not only have taught in the synagogues, but also have offered the prayers, for these in their contents, so far as we know them, were good, and could well have been said by Him.¹

¹ It is often affirmed that the synagogue service was much higher than that of the Temple, and that it furnished the model of Christian worship. This is an error. The synagogue was a late addendum to the Temple, and in the providence of God made helpful in the preaching of the Gospel; but the fundamental ideas of the two were wholly distinct. The Temple—one place of worship only for all—expressed unity; the many synagogues, diversity. The Temple services were prophetic and typical; they looked forward; the synagogue services looked backward. In the Temple, the altar of sacrifice was at the entrance, and then the altar of incense; in the synagogue there was no altar. In the Temple, the voice of man was not heard, God's worshippers should meet Him alone, and worship in holy silence. In the synagogue were heard human voices demanding attention,

This contrast cannot here be carried into detail, but he who studies the synagogue service will find little in it that tended to encourage the hope of the coming of the Messiah, or to prepare the people for it. There was also little to awaken in them the consciousness of their sin in the loss of all that was originally in the Most Holy.

But on this we cannot dwell. A remark may, however, be made upon the disposition of many modern critics to exalt the synagogue over the Temple, as providing a more spiritual worship. The same disposition is seen in the attempt to put as late as possible the utterances of the prophets and the Psalms. In a word, the destruction of the Temple, it is said, is to be regarded as a great gain, and the giving up of its leading sacrificial ideas and forms as necessary to a true and spiritual worship. In this, the spiritual is identified with the intellectual and the immaterial, it rejects the sensible and external—all that is positive and definite,—the last result being that the highest worship is the purely subjective. Every man is his own priest, and finally his own worshipper.

and utterances, often discordant, of human wisdom. In the Temple, there was nothing said or done that was not Divinely appointed; in the synagogue, all was of man's ordering.

CHAPTER XV

THE SON'S REDEMPTIVE WORK WHEN ON EARTH

WHEN the fulness of time had come, the Word was made flesh. The Son took unto Himself the nature of man, and was born of the Virgin Mary. In considering His work when on earth, two things are to be kept in mind: first, that He became very man, and that by Him as man all His work was done. He could not cease to be God, but it was as the Incarnate Son that He wrought our redemption. In the power of the Holy Spirit, who descended upon Him at His baptism, He taught and did His mighty works. How He could be at the same time very God and very man, is a mystery that the Church has never explained to our intellectual comprehension; we accept it in faith; He was a man, not in appearance only, but in reality.

Another thing to be kept in mind is, that He took human nature as in His mother; in other words, that He took our fallen humanity—the nature that He came to redeem. This is strongly denied by many who affirm that the taking of our nature, which is sinful, would make Him a sinner and so make it impossible for Him to be our

Redeemer from sin. But we remember what Bishop Browne has said (*Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*) : "That sin is not a part of human nature, but a fault of it. . . . Original sin is not human nature, but an accident of that nature." If sin were an essential element of our humanity, we could not in this life cease to be sinners, and exhortations to lead a sinless life would be bitter mockery. How idle for St. Paul to say to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1: 8), that they should be "blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and to the Philippians that they should be "children of God without blemish" (Phil. 2: 15); and of the Church that the Lord would present it to Himself, "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish" (Eph. 5: 27).

As the Redeemer, the Son must first deliver man from the law of sin, then from the law of death. And this could be done only by one in mortal flesh, and yet not a sinner. The Word was made flesh that sin might be condemned in the flesh (Rom. 8: 3). He must be made in all points like unto those He came to save, and be subject to like temptations, and yet remain in all holy, blameless, undefiled (Heb. 2: 11, 17; 4: 15). He kept perfectly the law of God; the Father's will was ever His will. Only through perfect and holy obedience in our flesh could He "condemn sin in the flesh."

Such being the relation of the Lord's humanity to our humanity—He being the brother of every child of Adam—let us note His more especial relations to the Jewish people as God's covenant people. The great promise of God to them was the Messiah and His Kingdom. In Eden, it was said as the initial prophecy, that the Seed of woman should bruise the serpent's head. More and more clearly to the successive generations were the Person and work of the Messiah revealed. That His Kingdom would be a righteous and holy one, and, therefore, that those who should enter into it must be righteous and holy, were truths abundantly made known through Moses and the prophets. Forms of worship were given that taught man both his moral condition as sinful, and how through animal sacrifices he might make confession of sin in its various forms, and through the sprinkling of blood be absolved and cleansed. All the Mosaic ritual was, as has been shown, prefigurative of the work of Christ as our Redeemer. The two altars set forth His twofold work, that of Atonement and that of Intercession. First, He must offer Himself upon the brazen altar—the Lamb without blemish or spot—a whole burnt offering; and then, ascending into Heaven, be made the Great High Priest to burn the incense upon the golden altar.

That the Jews should have understood fully

the purpose of God in the Messiah as made known by Moses and the prophets, was not to be expected. To them the mystery of His Person was not known, and therefore not the manner of His work in their redemption. Their position was very like that of most Christians of to-day in regard to the yet future work of Christ. They saw through a glass darkly. But one thing they knew: that He would establish a kingdom, and that all nations would be subject to Him. The prophets had strenuously insisted on their righteousness and holiness as conditions of the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom; and had also foretold a special preparation to be made through the ministry of the prophet Elijah. The great question, therefore, was: Were they prepared to receive the Messiah? There was much speculation as to the manner in which He would come. Must not Elijah first come? What proofs would He give of His Messianic claims?

The Lord entered upon His ministry. What was the issue now presented to the Jews? It was a personal one. "Am I, or am I not, the promised Messiah?" (Luke 9:18; Matt. 16:13.) But not unheralded should He come. God sent the Baptist to call the attention of the ecclesiastical rulers to Him, and by the rite of baptism to show them their religious condition as unprepared, and their need of repentance. The Baptist's words and his baptism did so far awaken their atten-

tion that they sent a deputation to him at the Jordan to enquire into the grounds of his mission (John 1: 19). To this deputation John declared that the Messiah was at hand, indeed, was already present among them. But his testimony was disregarded, except by a very few. The ecclesiastical and religious leaders did not think it necessary to see Jesus in person, or apparently to make any further inquiries. But their position in regard to Him was from the first a hostile one, and after the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda He was compelled to leave Judea and go into Gallilee to save His life (John 5: 16).

The Jews were not to receive the Lord as the Messiah upon His mere word. They were entitled to ask proof. What proof should they ask? The Baptist had borne his witness, and they had disregarded it. There were two kinds of proof He might give—one through His redemptive works, and one through His teaching, thus showing that Moses and the prophets had spoken of Him (Luke 24: 44). Through these two, the Work and the Word, must He prove Himself to be the Messiah. Let us then consider the first, the Work, or the miracle—its character, and the place it holds in the redemptive economy. Are the miraculous and the supernatural to be identified?

THE WORK.—Of miracles various terms are used

in the Scriptures, because of the various ways in which they may be viewed. They are termed "signs," "powers," "wonders," sometimes "works," or "mighty works." But we may still ask: What distinguishes a miracle? Is it in the power which is displayed in it? Is it in the end effected by it? Is it in the agent through whom the power is put forth? Is it in the relation of the miracle to the ordinary course of events? In their answers to these questions, writers on miracles are by no means agreed as to what constitutes the distinctly miraculous element.¹

¹ Mozely (*On Miracles*) finds the chief characteristic of a miracle to be "the correspondence of a fact with a notification that it will take place." "An event and the announcement of it." "The two taken together are proof of a super-human agency." Bishop Lyttleton (*Place of Miracles in Religion*) says: "Miracles are occasional visible acts of power beyond human experience to account for, or human experience to explain, though sometimes wrought through human agency, and are impressed with the character of righteousness." It is said by Dr. Bushnell (*Nature and the Supernatural*): "A miracle differs from the supernatural working of a man upon nature in that it is the work of another and higher being." This is to say that man can of himself work a supernatural work, but cannot work a miracle. Archbishop Trench affirms "that an extraordinary Divine causality belongs to the essence of a miracle. . . . Beside and beyond the ordinary operations of nature, higher powers intrude and make themselves felt." We have thus a higher and Divine order manifesting itself in a lower. Oehler (*Old Test. Theology*, Trans.): "Miracles are extraordinary manifestations and occurrences in which God makes known His power for the purposes of His kingdom."

Without criticising the various definitions that have been given, we may note the leading characteristics of God's redemptive work in their bearing on the point before us:

1. That its end is to deliver man from the law of sin and death, and this is effected by words of truth and works of power ;

2. That all is done by the Spirit of God, whoever may be the agent through whom the power is put forth, whether angels or men ;

3. That redemption is not completed till the Redeemer gives up the Kingdom to the Father ;

4. That miracles as redemptive have a place only in Unnature. Miracles wrought by Satanic agency will be spoken of later.

That the present order of the world is not as originally constituted, or no redemptive work would be needed, is plain. Nature has become Unnature, order has become disorder, human life has come under the power of disease and death. In the moral realm, good and evil everywhere struggle for mastery, both in the individual man and in society. In the material realm, there is strife and confusion. But this is not to say that in the present Unnature there is no fixed order, no permanent laws. Were this so, all rational life would be impossible. Law is indispensable to government. A usurper, taking possession of a newly conquered kingdom, must retain its old constitution and laws, or establish new, or

anarchy follows. Unnature is not anarchy; there is an order, but it is not the primitive order; the present cosmos is disordered and the fruit of sin. But an exception to this present order would be extraordinary, and would awaken our wonder, and be rightly named miraculous; but not supernatural. We may not take the present order for the original and Divinely appointed standard, and by this judge acts and events, and affirm that miracles, being violations of it, are therefore incredible. The essential characteristic of a miracle, so-called, is that it is redemptive, and could therefore have had no place in the primitive order, where all was good, nor can it have in the future perfect order.

We thus see what is the relation of the miraculous to the supernatural. We know that the present order of nature is not the first and Divinely appointed, but is unnatural, and, therefore, not the standard by which to judge whether any events are truly supernatural. If a miracle is redemptive, it cannot have a supernatural character in the sense in which we have defined this term. It may be extraordinary and superhuman, but it is not a restoration of the primitive order. Take for instance the healings wrought by the Lord. All these miracles were works of restoration from disease. He heals a leper, or a palsied man. These are but temporary deliverances, the disease may return; the healed ones are not finally de-

livered from its power. He raised the dead, but all those raised died again, they were not set free from the law of death. The order established at the beginning was not restored.

It is from overlooking the fact that miracles are always, directly or indirectly, redemptive, and thus show an existing disorder, that leads many to say that they are violations of a primitive and immutable order, and therefore incredible. But this is to delude ourselves with words. We of ourselves know nothing of an order of nature but what our experience gives us, for through faith we believe that all was good at the first, and what it gives us we must accept. We cannot reject a fact because new to our very limited experience. Any well attested miracle is to be received like any other well attested fact. Our notions of its impossibility, based upon the belief that it has never taken place before, do not affect its reality. This fallacy of Hume, that man's knowledge and experience give a true standard of judgment, has long been exploded. Believing that man through his disobedience came under the law of death, and the earth under "the bondage of corruption," we can find no difficulty in believing in a redemptive work embracing both earth and man. But the object of this is not simply to restore the old, but to bring in the supernatural, the new, which has its beginning in the Resurrection of the Lord. All

before this is remedial and transient in its effects; the supernatural is permanent, for it is the perfect.

In all that was done in redemption from the fall of Adam till the Lord ascended into Heaven, we find nothing, therefore, that can be properly called supernatural. There were from the first great and extraordinary workings of God, but all were remedial, tending to remove the evils of sin, to destroy the works of the devil, to bring men again into communion with God. They served also to prefigure the higher and heavenly relations to come through the risen Christ. But all was partial, imperfect, temporary, and preparatory to the next stage, when the supernatural would be made real and manifest under the glorified Lord. Till His Resurrection, no one healed by Him was delivered from the law of death. The curse upon the ground was not removed, men could find no Eden on the earth, the lost Paradise was not regained, the discords of the elements did not cease. Satan continued to be the god and prince of the present cosmos. The redemptive acts of God, however wonderful and mighty, served only as preparatory steps to bring in the perfect and unchangeable. The supernatural was not realised, nor could be till "the day of redemption" (Rom. 8: 23; Luke 21: 28).

To speak here of the Old Testament miracles in detail is impossible. Many were wrought by

God through Moses, and later through others, as the prophets Elijah and Elisha. He also so directed the forces of nature as to do His will without human intervention, as in the Deluge, or He made use of the angels as His instruments.

With these remarks upon the place of the miracle in the work of redemption, we may proceed to notice a special class of miracles, because of their peculiar character, those wrought as credentials of a Divine commission. These are usually called "signs." As God makes known His will to men through men commissioned by Him, we are authorised to ask what proof they can give that they are sent by Him. This proof may be of two kinds: they may work miracles, or may appeal to the truth they teach. Let us briefly consider each.

It has already been said that it is a general belief among Christians that when God sends a message to men, He will always accredit the messenger by the power to work a miracle, and that this is a sufficient proof of his Divine commission. In this is a measure of truth. It is true that when God passes onward from one stage of His redemptive work to another, the new demands miraculous proof, but it is because of the new truth which is now brought forth. Those who act for Him in bringing in the new stage must, therefore, authenticate their Divine commission by a sign. An illustration of this is seen in the

case of Moses. God was about to begin a new dispensation, to lay its foundations, and to make known its fundamental laws. A people was to be brought into new and special relations to Him, and Moses was therefore obliged to show to them that he had a Divine commission. To this end, God gave him power to work certain signs (Ex. 4: 1). The people seeing and accepting these signs as sufficient proof, he then proceeds to fulfil his mission of delivering them from their Egyptian bondage, and of leading them to the Promised Land. But these credential signs are to be distinguished from the miracles which he subsequently wrought in the prosecution of their deliverance. As credentials, their end was accomplished when the people believed that he was sent of God, and were ready to follow him. All later miracles would, indeed, serve as credentials, but they were not wrought for that purpose.

THE WORD.—A second proof that men are sent of God to reveal His will, is the truth they teach. But this involves the fact that they to whom His messages are sent have already some knowledge of His truth. When God has once spoken, His recorded or remembered words remain the standard of all His future words; their meaning is, perhaps, enlarged or somewhat modified, but never contradicted. The new must be in harmony with the old. This is seen in the case of

all the prophets following Moses. The truths he had taught were the norm by which their utterances were to be judged. After the death of Moses, the leading of the people into the Promised Land was given to Joshua, but he wrought no miracle as a credential. He was chosen of God to carry on the work begun by Moses, and therefore he was directed to do all according to the Law which Moses had commanded (Josh. 1: 7). And this Law continued to be the rule for judging all future prophetic utterances, for of none of the prophets, except in the cases of Elijah and Elisha, and one other unknown, do we find that they wrought any miracles. Nor were those of Elijah or Elisha wrought in proof that they were sent as prophets but in discharge of their functions as guides and leaders of the people. The prophets all appeal to the religious discernment of their hearers, based upon the teachings of the Law; the truths they uttered were their own evidence. As God's purpose moved onward, there was ever need of new prophetic light and warning, but the purpose was one, the Law unchanged.

As the Incarnate Son came in person to bring in a new stage of redemption, He, like Moses, must give visible proof that He was sent of God. And this He did. He wrought certain miracles as signs, or credentials, and these were of various kinds. The first, wrought before His mother

and newly gained disciples, was the changing of water into wine at the wedding feast. This, indeed, was not so much to awaken as to confirm their faith in Himself, and to show the character of His mission—the change of the lower into the higher. This is called the “beginning of his signs,” and is the key to them all (John 2: 11). He wrought other signs soon after at Jerusalem, and we are told that many believed on Him (John 2: 23). One of these was Nicodemus, who said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with him.” But these signs, done by Him in proof of His Divine sending, are, as in the case of Moses, to be distinguished from those done in the subsequent prosecution of His ministry. But they did not convince the Pharisees and Sadducees. They would not believe unless He gave them such a sign as they demanded (Matt. 16: 1).

Besides the initial or credential miracles which addressed themselves to the heads of the people, the Lord wrought many more in fulfilling His work as the Redeemer (John 7: 31). Each was indeed a proof of His Divine commission, but its object was to show that there could be deliverance from the law of sin and death, and that if men would receive Him, He would be their deliverer (Matt. 8: 16, 17). As it is said of Him, He “went about doing good and healing all that

were oppressed of the devil" (Acts 10: 38). All works done by the Lord when on earth were signs and proofs that whatever was evil in the realms of nature would be overcome, all were foreshadowings of the future redemption, thus proving Him to be the Redeemer. But as He did not correspond to their conception of a conquering Messiah, His miracles were of little avail, and the greatest of these, the resurrection of Lazarus, only made the rulers more eager and persistent to put Him to death.

But the chief appeal of the Lord was to His words, and their truth, not to His miracles. The Jews of His day had Moses and the prophets, and by their teachings they were to judge His words (John 5: 46); and all of them who had studied the Scriptures aright, and had true spiritual discernment, did not need a miracle to convince them that He was sent of God. His first disciples were made through a brief converse with Him, leading to the conviction that He was the promised Messiah (John 1: 41). They asked for no miracle. And it was to the perception of the truth which He taught that He attached the highest importance. The miracle held a subordinate place. Of those who believed, seeing the signs which He did, it is said, "Jesus did not trust Himself unto them" (John 2: 24).

The Jews having the Law and the prophets, should have believed the evidence of His words,

as in perfect harmony with them, but if they did not He added the evidence of His works. "Though ye believe Me not, believe My works." "The works that I do, bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me" (John 5: 36). In the case of the Baptist, whose faith seems to have failed in his imprisonment, He referred to His works (Matt. 11: 5). Always the word has a higher place than the work, because to receive it shows a receptiveness to the truth already existing. The Lord said: "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me" (John 5: 46). He reproved those who would not believe except they saw signs and wonders. St. Paul reasoned with the Jews out of the Scriptures, but he made no appeal to Christ's miracles (Acts 13: 17-). When many of His disciples went back because of His hard teaching, Peter, who became His disciple through His word, said: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6: 68).

This rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the heads of the people led to another form of His ministry, carried on in Galilee, in which His words and works were still to prove His Messianic claims, but were to be addressed to all the people. Foreseeing that the covenant people would not receive Him, He gathered disciples around Him, and taught them the meaning of the Law and the Prophets, and of the nature of His own relations

to the Father, that they might serve as the foundation of His Church. From the Apostles, after much instruction, He obtained the confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16: 16). Now could He take another step, and tell them of His approaching death. But He does not tell them how His death stood related to their deliverance from the law of sin and death. Only after His Resurrection could they apprehend the significance of His death on the cross as the means of bringing in a new and higher life.

A few words may be said of the Lord's relation to angels, good and evil, during His earthly ministry.

In the previous mention of angels the question was asked as to their powers over the material forces of nature, and the supposition made that they may have been the helpers of the Word in the formation of the earth. It is in itself probable from the part they play in the Divine economy that they may have a knowledge of the qualities of matter and of its forces, and of its possible combinations, far surpassing all that science has yet discovered. If man obtains control over material nature by knowing its laws, how much larger may their knowledge be, and how much greater their control. The most recent discoveries of science may have been long known to them.

But whether the angels have the power to do

those extraordinary works which we call miracles, by virtue of their place as angels, or are endowed at the time specially for their service, they have played a most important part in man's redemption, as we see in the Old Testament. Of the various forms of their activity, mention has been made. But there is in the relation of the Lord when on earth to the angels who had served Him, one point of interest to be noted. After He had humbled Himself to take our nature, and was "made a little lower than the angels" (Heb. 2: 9), He is never said to have exercised any authority over them, or to have employed them in His service during His earthly ministry. It is the Father who at His prayer sends to Him twelve legions of angels. In the wilderness, after His temptation, and in the garden, after His agony, angels, sent by the Father, came and ministered unto Him. It was not till after His Ascension that it is said, "Angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (1 Peter 3: 22), and it is at His return that the Father saith, "Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1: 6), and they come with Him when He comes to take the Kingdom (Matt. 24: 31).

Of the relation of the Lord when on earth to evil angels, the Gospels give us abundant information. Of demoniacal possessions we need not here speak, except to note that it was His presence that awakened the fear and, doubtless, also

stimulated the hostility of the evil spirits. "To cast out devils" is spoken of as an important part of His redemptive work (Mark 1: 34; 3: 11). But His enemies saw in this only a proof that He was acting in collusion with the prince of the devils (Matt. 9: 34).

Of miracles wrought by evil angels, no particular instance is given in the Scriptures, but it is said by Archbishop Trench: "That it is meant in Scripture to attribute real wonders to Satan, there is no manner of doubt." But Satan's work is to mar, to destroy, and the sphere of his operations is in the fallen, the unnatural. The greater the disorder and confusion, physical and moral, the greater is his power. Man separated from God is open to all forms of Satanic temptation. Unwilling to obey the truth, he is ready to accept the lie. False prophets appear, miracle workers abound, and all without spiritual discernment are led astray. Our Lord declared that just before His return, false Christs would arise, and show great signs and wonders (Matt. 24: 24). Satan has his false gospel, and confirms it by lying wonders. He gives credentials through many signs, and especially to his last and chief representative, the man of sin, of whom it is said that his "coming is according to the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2: 9). Of these, Archbishop Trench says: "They are lying wonders, not because in them-

selves frauds and illusions, but because they are wrought in support of the kingdom of lies." Of the false prophet, the builder of the church of the Antichrist, it is said: "He doeth great wonders [signs, R. V.] . . . and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles [signs] which he had power to do" (Rev. 13: 13, 14).

That there were false prophets in the Lord's day, we know from His warning words (Matt. 7: 15). But who were they, and what was the character of their prophecies? Mention has been made already of two classes of prophets among the Jews—those prophesying through the Holy Spirit given them, and those prophesying out of their own hearts. The last were false prophets, not because they denied Jehovah or a Divine purpose, but because they mistook that purpose, and thus led the people astray. Of this class were many in the Lord's day. They did not believe that the condition of things was so evil as the Baptist declared, or that the Lord's predictions of coming judgments could be fulfilled. God would not deliver His city and temple to be destroyed. The Messiah would speedily come and save them. The burden of their prophecy was peace and safety. They were His covenant people, God would not forsake them. To say this, was blasphemy (Acts 6: 11-).

We do not read of any signs or miracles wrought by these false prophets in attestation of their

words. It is by their predictions that they deceive, and this form of deception continues to the end (1 John 4: 1). But we are told that before the Lord's return, both forms of Satanic activity—the deceiving word and the deceiving miracle—will be heard and seen (Matt. 24: 11, 24). Satan himself, transformed into an angel of light, will have his teachers of lies who will come in the like guise, and his miracle workers with their flattering predictions; who will confirm the prophetic words by their works. All elements and powers of deception will be seen in full exercise, and it is foretold that multitudes will be deceived: "The whole earth wondered after the beast. . . . All that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb" (Rev. 13: 3, 8).

Prophecy.—We may now ask how far the Lord's prophetic words served as credentials of His mission. He was often called a prophet (Luke 7: 16; John 6: 14), and even in the day of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the multitude said, "This is the prophet, Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee" (Matt. 21: 11). But in prophecy, which involves a fulfilment in a more or less distant future, there cannot be a proof of the prophet's mission till his words are fulfilled (Deut. 18: 22); and the Lord did not appeal to it. He predicted many things, but His predictions looked forward to events after His own day, and

were not proofs to convince those who heard Him of His Divine commission. He foretold His own death, and the speedy destruction of Jerusalem, and the persecution of His disciples. All these were near at hand, but too late to serve as credentials, and most of His predictions referred to a distant future in the history of the Jews and of His Church.¹

¹ It is no part of the present writing to interpret the Lord's prophecies, but it should not be overlooked in the study of them that they have a wide and far-reaching scope, and look far into the future. This is especially the case in His answer to the question of the disciples: "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (or "consummation of the age") (Matt. 24:3). While He makes mention of some signs common to all times, wars, pestilences, and famines, He makes the special sign to be, "The abomination of desolation stand[ing] in the holy place." This sign may have had an early partial fulfilment in the Zealots when the Temple was destroyed, but it awaits its complete realisation at the end of the age, when the lawless one, the man of sin, appears, seating himself in the Temple of God, the last and greatest of the many Antichrists, he whom the Lord will destroy at His coming (Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:8). It may be questioned whether there is in this discourse of the Lord any reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, although He spoke of it at other times (Luke 21:20). He seems rather to have looked forward to that capture of the city of which Zechariah speaks (Zech. 14:1-8), the day when He shall come and His holy ones with Him, and stand upon the Mount of Olives. To this time, also, the judgment of the nations (Matt. 25:32) may be referred, and those who then gather against Jerusalem (Zech. 14:2) be the same as "the nations" (Rev. 19:15), the armies, of the Beast. The standard of this judgment is the treatment of His people during the antichristian persecutions (Matt. 25:40-45).

We may notice the Lord's relation to the worship of His day. The imperfection, or, rather, mutilation, of the Mosaic ritual, through the emptiness of the Most Holy Place, has already been spoken of, and this must have especially grieved the heart of the Lord whenever He worshipped at the Temple, for it was a continual reminder of the sin of the people. But so long as His Father accepted the remaining rites, and made them a blessing to sincere worshippers, He honoured His Father not only by His own worship, but also by His acts in cleansing the sanctuary from its desecrations by the traffickers who made it a den of thieves (Matt. 21: 13; John 2: 15).

Doubtless, there was much else done within the Temple equally abhorrent to Him, much in the priesthood that was worthy of severest condemnation. There were the high priests, Annas and Caiaphas, who wore upon their foreheads the golden plate, "Holy to the Lord," when their hearts were full of hate toward Him, the Holy One. It is a legitimate inference from the part the priests took in the crucifixion of Christ, that a considerable majority, at least, were bitterly hostile to Him, and rejoiced in His death. Probably, most of them really believed that they were doing God service (John 16: 2; Luke 23: 34). But it is to be noted that the woes pronounced by the Lord were upon the Scribes and Pharisees, and not upon the priests (Matt. 23). We

are told that a little later "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6: 7).

It is no wonder that the end of this worship, led by those who put His Son to death, should speedily have come, in God's providence, through the destruction of the Temple by Titus.

The Jews were henceforth to be like other nations to whom the Gospel was to be preached. The circumcised must now be baptised, the highest place in the Messianic Kingdom was no longer theirs, but given to the people of the new covenant; and these were to be gathered from all nations. But for the Jews, one privilege was reserved: to them first the Gospel should be preached.

Mention has already been made of the unconscious hypocrisy that had become so marked a feature of the religious life of the people during the post-exilic period. The Lord met it everywhere in His day. It was the belief both of individuals and of the nation, as represented in its religious leaders, that God was so obeyed and honoured by them that He was well pleased with them; and that all words of condemnation were contrary to His will. "We have Abraham to our Father," "We be Abraham's seed," was in their belief a sufficient reply to the stern reproofs of the Baptist and of the Lord (Matt. 3: 9; John 8: 33). It seemed to them impossible that God could be really angry with His covenant people.

The same spirit of self-righteousness was seen in individuals. The young ruler could say of the Commandments: "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" (Matt. 19: 20.)

The Pharisee thanked God that he was not as other men. "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess" (Luke 18: 11, 12). Another would pull the mote out of his brother's eye, but considered not the beam in his own eye. The Lord denounced the Scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites in the sevenfold woe (Matt. 23). But they justified themselves. They were maintaining the old truth against Him, who taught doctrines unknown to their fathers. They were not conscious, but unconscious hypocrites, and therefore Jesus could pray for them: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34). They thought themselves to be what they were not. From this delusion they could be set free only by the severe judgments of God teaching them how they appeared in His eyes.

We are to note the words of the Lord in reference to the proselyting work of the Jews in His day. "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte and when he is made, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves" (Matt. 23: 15). The universal proclamation of

the Gospel by the Church in obedience to the command, "Go, . . . make disciples of all the nations," is in striking contrast to the attitude of the Jews to the peoples around them.

The laws of Moses, civil and religious, were for a single people, those living within a very limited territory, and having one central place of worship. There was no command given them to go without their national boundaries, and gather worshippers. That all the nations would be finally brought under the rule of the Messiah, was one of the promises to Abraham, and often repeated by the prophets, but it would not be fulfilled till He came to set up the Messianic Kingdom. There was no command to convert the Gentiles to Judaism as a preparatory step. There were, indeed, prophetic words addressed to them, as by the prophet Amos and others, but these words were spoken at Jerusalem, and it is uncertain whether or not they were ever made known to those addressed. It is true that a mixed multitude went up with Moses out of Egypt, but they were in no true sense proselytes, and that through the dispersion of the Jews at the exile and after, there were many Gentile proselytes in the Lord's day. Through the scattered Jews, some great truths of their religion, especially that of one God, had been made known to many. But the Lord did not look on the proselyting zeal of the Pharisees with favour

(Matt. 23: 15). Not till the foundation of redemption had been laid by the sacrifice on the cross, the Crucified One set as the Head of the Church, and the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven, was the command given to preach the Gospel to every creature. Now could the preaching of the cross, without distinction of race, begin. However it might have been in the patriarchal times (and doubtless God had then faithful preachers of His truth), to the Jews no command was given that should go and make converts among the neighbouring peoples. There were occasional proselytes, but no appointed missionary work.

We may see in the spiritual condition of the Jews as seen by the Lord, the ground of His severe condemnation of their labour to make proselytes (Matt. 23: 15). Mistaking the Divine purpose, wholly unconscious of their own sins, and conspiring to kill Him who told them the truth, they were not those to be sent forth to teach the heathen people the righteousness and holiness of God.

The Lord's work among the living ended when on the cross He cried, "It is finished." But He had still a mission to fulfil among the dead. In Hades was an innumerable company—all the generations from Adam downward—and these were of widest diversities of character and knowledge, of all forms of religious beliefs, and of lives of all degrees of goodness and wickedness. No eye but that of God could know their hearts, and

judge of the moral condition of each, and assign fitting reward or punishment.

While we speak of Sheol, or Hades, or Hell, as the place where abide the souls of the departed, yet we are told that all do not dwell indiscriminately together. There are distinct places of abode corresponding to moral character—Paradise, Abraham's Bosom, the Pit, the depths of Sheol, or lowest Hell. In affirming our belief that the Lord descended into Hell, or went to the place of separated spirits, we affirm that He had a mission to fulfil toward some of those there gathered. To what class did He go? Those only are specifically mentioned who perished in the Deluge. Did He preach to these alone? Or are these mentioned as a sample or illustration of all? And what was the content of the Lord's preaching? Into these questions, we need not enter. But we cannot believe that He went to announce to any their eternal condemnation, but rather to announce the redemptive work He had done—a message of comfort and of hope. But we note that whatever of change for the better His mission may have made in those to whom He spake, it was one of degree, not of kind. He made known no new probation to be in the disembodied state whereby the evil might become the good, the unholy the holy. The unrepentant remained such, but there might be in all others progress from lower degrees of knowledge and goodness to higher.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LORD'S WORK FROM HEAVEN

IT has already been said that the foundation of the supernatural was laid in the Resurrection of the Lord. Before this, humanity existed in two conditions, the natural, or created; the unnatural, or fallen. In the risen Christ, we see a new condition, the supernatural. This is the condition to which humanity, in the purpose of God, looked from the beginning, the highest possible to which it could attain. The Lord first attained to it. He was the First-born from the dead, the first Immortal Man, and as risen He could be glorified with the glory for which He prayed: "And now, O Father, glorify thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17: 5). The ideal glory became real. Ascending to Heaven, He was seated at the Father's right hand, and made Lord over all.

Let us note the two stages of the Lord's life, the earthly and the heavenly, and the point of transition. He came in mortal flesh, died upon the cross, was buried, and arose again, and

ascended into Heaven. In His Resurrection, His body and soul were so reunited that no separation was possible. The mortal life gave place to the immortal: "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him" (Romans 6: 9). And He Himself says, "I was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1: 18).¹

As risen, Christ is the Living One, the Immortal Man, and so able to act as the Representative of the Living God in all His future work during the ages. Now can He receive the anointing of the Spirit whereby He can fulfil all the redemptive offices to which the Father has called Him (Heb.

¹ It is a misfortune that the words "mortal" and "immortal" should be currently used in such discrepant, and, indeed, contradictory senses. We say, "Man is mortal," meaning that body and soul may be separated, and we say, "Man is immortal," meaning that the soul has a conscious existence after its separation from the body. In like manner, the term "immortality" is used to indicate that condition of being which follows the reunion of body and soul, or that after the resurrection; and, also, of that condition which begins at death,—that of the separated soul—to which we assign no known end. We cannot rightly speak of immortality except as following upon the resurrection, after the reunion of soul and body. We may speak of separated souls as continuing to exist, but they are under the law of death. Of Himself the Lord says: "I was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore." He was as a separated soul, dead, as reunited to the body, alive for evermore. As risen, the Lord is immortal, there is no more the possibility of death; and His faithful ones will at their resurrection or translation enter into the same immortality.

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1: 9). He can be made "Head over all things to the Church" (Eph. 1: 22), the High Priest "after the power of an endless life" (Heb. 7: 16, 24), the King of the Kingdom of which there shall be no end (Luke 1: 33). Each of these offices demands our attention.

First, His office as Head of the Church. Headship is a new relation, established after His ascension, and involves a body (Eph. 1: 22, 23). Having perfected His Son in resurrection—the Heavenly Man—He can be the giver of the new resurrection life to others. This is more than to make Him Lord, for headship demands community of life. A king rules his subjects, but they are not one in him. It is as "the quickening Spirit," the second Adam, that Christ is the Head, and the Church becomes His body. He is the Vine, and His members are the branches; and as no branch can be in the literal vine except it have the life of the vine, so is it with His members. His life is their life. As Adam was the sole source of the natural life, so is Christ of the supernatural. St. Paul says: "I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2: 20).

As all in Christ have one Head and one life, this unity has in it all other unities. If it is perfect, if the body is in entire accord with the Head, and the members in accord with one another, there will be unity in its teachings, in its works, and in all its activities. But it can do nothing inde-

pendent of Him. As man's body is the instrument by which he acts on things external to himself, so is it with Christ's body. Responsive to His will, He in Heaven can act through it on the earth, and carry on His redemptive work.

It is therefore to the constitution of His body, the Church, and its functions, that our attention must now be turned. As absent in Heaven and invisible to men, the Head must be made known to the world through His body. It must, therefore, be visible, having known ministries, and ordinances, and rites of worship, and thus plainly distinguishable from all other religious communities. Its teachings, also, will give it a distinctive character, and not permit the Lord to be confused with other religious teachers, or its creed with other creeds. Its unity—many scattered over all the earth, and yet visibly one, both in belief and in action—will be to all nations a proof that there is one Living Head over all. It is this heavenly unity among His disciples to which the Lord refers as a proof of His Divine mission: "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me" (John 17: 23, R. V.).

United to its Head, and abiding in the grace of its calling, the Church fulfils under Christ two chief functions—first, to preach the Gospel to all nations; secondly, to join in the intercession offered by Christ in Heaven. We will first con-

sider the Church, in relation to its Head, as His instrument to preach the Gospel to all nations.

The work of preaching the Gospel to the heathen was given to the evangelist ministry. The work of the evangelists, who came to the nations as messengers of Jesus, of whom the nations knew nothing, was to make Him known. This point was of first importance. They must declare who Jesus was, His place and authority, and show that they were commissioned by Him. We cannot here enter into details. Jesus, having been presented to the Gentiles as bearing the sins of men on the Cross and as rising from the dead, and now seated at God's right hand, to come again as their Judge, they would ask the proofs of so strange a story. The Evangelists could not refer them to the Scriptures or to prophecy, as when addressing the Jews; what proof, then, could they give of His existence and authority? Putting aside the proof from the ethical character of their words, and unable to appeal to spiritual discernment, they must prove their commission by their works. The work must illustrate and confirm the word. That they did this, we see many illustrations in the Acts of the Apostles. We are told that when the Evangelist Philip preached at Samaria, the people gave heed with one accord unto his words "when they saw the signs which he did,"—the casting out of unclean spirits, and the healing of the palsied and the

lame (Acts 8: 6). We are told, also, that when St. Peter healed Æneas "all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord" (Acts 9: 35). The infliction of blindness upon Elymas by St. Paul led the Proconsul Paulus to believe (Acts 13: 12); and the healing of Publius awakened the faith of others. After the healing of Dorcas, it is said, "many believed on the Lord" (Acts 9: 42). At the Council in Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas rehearsed "what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them" (Acts 15: 12).

But without citing more instances of the place of the work, in confirmation of the word, we are to note that in no other way could the risen Lord make His place and power known. Unknown to the Gentiles, He was to be made known as their Redeemer through the redemptive work done in His name. It was the prayer of the disciples that "signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child, Jesus" (Acts 4: 30). Absent and invisible, He would manifest Himself to men by His word and His work, for the word and the work though spoken and done by the Church are His. His words in relation to the Father, "I can of myself do nothing" (John 5: 30), have their place also in the mouth of the Church. It is His instrument co-working with Him; all done in it, all its missionary activities are in His hands, both as to place and time, He making known His will

through the Spirit (Acts 16: 6). And according as it is in unity with Him, can the Gospel have power in the world.

We may now see how the Evangelists proved their Divine commission. It was through the confirmation of their word by the Lord's working with them (Mark 16: 20). They were to speak the word with all boldness, and He would stretch forth His hand to heal. Wrought in His name their works were His signs and wonders and thus proved both His existence and power, and their own commission. Thus the work, though in itself of much less value than the word of truth, must have had great influence upon those who knew nothing of the past actings of God as recorded in the Scriptures, or of the truths which He had revealed. We thus see why, in commanding the Gospel to be preached to all men, He promised that the work should confirm the word: "These signs shall follow them that believe"; they shall cast out devils, speak with new tongues, take up serpents, overcome all vegetable poison, and heal the sick. In fine, evil in all its many sensible forms should be under their power, but this power must be put forth in the Lord's name and by His co-operation—"the Lord working with them [His Evangelists] and confirming the word by the signs that followed." The place of the work within the Church will be spoken of later.

It is to be noted here, that the preaching of the

Gospel was for the gathering of that election that constitutes the body of Christ. Membership in this body is more than salvation, it is the highest blessing that can be conferred upon man, involving the highest communion with God, and joint heirship with Christ. There is salvation without the Church, but those who hear the Gospel of the Kingdom and consciously and deliberately reject it, show not only a spirit of disobedience, but such spiritual blindness and hardness of heart that communion with God is made impossible without humble repentance.

Having spoken of the Incarnate Son as the Head of the Church, and of the work of the Church in preaching the Gospel, we now turn to His office as the great High Priest, and the function of the Church in Intercession.

It was through His Resurrection in the power of the immortal life that the Lord was prepared to enter upon His priestly work. This work had been clearly prefigured in the Mosaic ritual. First, upon the brazen altar in the outer court, in view of all, had He offered Himself, the Lamb without blemish, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world; now ascending into Heaven, and entering into the Holy Place, He must burn the sweet incense upon the golden altar before the Father. The first stage He had already fulfilled, the second He is now fulfilling (Heb. 9: 1). He suffered upon the Cross, a spectacle to all the world; but

now no human eye beholds Him, within the veil, and His intercessions are addressed only to the Father's ear. And He is alone. No man or angel can stand beside Him at that altar, no disembodied spirit, no martyr or saint, no one still under the law of death. But He is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek," made "after the power of an endless life" (Heb. 7:16-).

As in the work of preaching the Gospel, the Church takes part with her Head, so is it in His work of Intercession. What He in Heaven asks of the Father, the Church on the earth is also to ask. This demands a perfect unity of will between the Head and the body, a unity based upon community of life. Through the Holy Spirit sent by Him, and dwelling in His members, He awakens in them the same desires that are in His own heart, and their petitions He presents to the Father as His own, and they are accepted. But prayers of the Church that He does not make His own can find no acceptance with the Father, and they remain unanswered. It is in this sense that we understand His promises to His disciples: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you" (John 15: 7, 16). In full unity with her Head, the Church cannot ask amiss.

It is in this work of prayer and intercession in

unity with her Head that the Church fulfils that function to which all her previous training is preparatory. Its fulfilment demands the fullest development of the spiritual life, the deepest sense of sin, the highest measure of faith, the largest sympathy with all. The golden plate upon the forehead of the Jewish High Priest bore the inscription, "Holy to the Lord," now first perfectly fulfilled in the High Priest who intercedes for us—the Holy One, Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners (Heb. 7: 26). As He was holy, so must the Church be, in order to take part with Him in His intercessory work. As the sacrifice upon the brazen altar was always in the order of worship before the burning of incense upon the golden altar, so in all rightly constructed liturgies the prayers are the end to which all the earlier services point, and to which they are preparatory. Through confession, absolution, dedication, and pastoral instruction based upon the Scriptures, the worshippers are made spiritually ready for the last and highest duty, to join with the High Priest in His intercessions.¹

This brief consideration of the two great functions of the Church, the preaching of the Gospel to the nations, and joint intercession with her

¹ We see that while the greater part of the written prayers of the Church are permanent, as having reference to the past acts of God in our salvation, and to our fixed relations to the Head through His ordinances, yet there will be frequent occasion as the redemptive work goes on for new petitions,

Head, shows that neither can be rightly fulfilled, unless there is unity with the Head, and among her members. A Church divided against itself cannot fulfil its evangelistic or priestly work.

Hidden from the world, His words addressed to the Father and unheard by men, the importance of the Lord's ministry of intercession as an essential element in redemption has been more and more forgotten. Few seem to recognise that it is this ministry, the petitions from the Saviour's loving heart for His unfaithful and disobedient children, and for all men, that have often turned away the righteous judgments of God. How often in the Holy Place may have been repeated the prayer offered upon the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"! Abraham, looking down from the mount upon the cities of the plain, was persistent in his prayers for mercy (Gen. 18: 23-32). How much more will the Son continue to offer His intercessions even to the end!

As the Lord was prepared through His Resurrection to be the Head of the Church and the High Priest, so also was He prepared to be the Ruler of the nations, "the Prince of the kings of the earth." When He was on the earth, He gave

both for ourselves and others. A liturgy, therefore, can never be regarded as finished. The Church under new conditions must often lift up new prayers, asking the Son to intercede with the Father for her deliverance from evils, and giving thanks for His interpositions on her behalf.

the example of submission to all worldly authority. He submitted to the ordinances of civil rulers. He counselled no rebellion against the Roman yoke, nor Herodian usurpations. He saw in the civil rulers those permitted by His Father to have authority, whether for blessing or for judgment, and was obedient to them. But rising from the dead in the power of the Resurrection life, all is reversed; now He could say: "All authority hath been given unto Me in Heaven and on earth." Now could He be seated at the right hand of the Father, and crowned with glory and honour. But He was absent from the earth, no one saw Him as the reigning Lord and sitting on His throne. The nations did not know Him as their King. His rule was like that of the invisible Father, the sceptre in His hand was not seen. There were no visible proofs that He guided the order of events, and ruled over the world; and there are none such to this day.

But we must note the distinction between this rule over the nations as their King, and that in the Church as its Head. In the former, it is providential; in the latter, direct. He does not appoint visibly or audibly the princes and rulers of the nations, but determines by His providential actings who they shall be. In this sense, "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1), and, therefore, are to be obeyed as His representatives. But in the Church, His rule is direct

and personal, though the expression of His will is put forth through the Holy Spirit. Speaking through men, it is His to appoint who shall fill the offices of His Church, and through them His authority is declared and administered. No one can fill any office except according to His will; and this will is expressed by the Holy Spirit speaking through men, and chiefly through the ministry of the prophet.

Whilst we see the distinction between the actings of Christ as the Head of His Church, and as the King of the nations, we know that He is to be equally obeyed and honoured in both. But the two spheres are not to be confounded. A priest may not assume authority in the civil sphere, nor the secular ruler in the ecclesiastical. As Head of the Church, He calls it into His service to preach His Gospel; as High Priest, it joins in His intercession; but as King, He gives it no place in the government of the nations. As He fulfils both offices, is King and Priest, those that act under Him in each sphere can act harmoniously together, and thus order and peace be preserved (Rom. 13: 1). But the intrusion of prince or priest into the sphere of the other brings confusion and strife. The intermingling of the spiritual and the secular is called in figurative language, "fornication," and the resulting condition of things is presented under the symbol "Babylon" (Rev. 14: 8; 17: 5).

Thus as the body of Christ, constituted by the Father in infinite wisdom, and indwelt of the Holy Ghost, the Church was set to be the perfect instrument through which the Head, though in Heaven and invisible to man, could carry on His work in the world and be manifested to the world in the full power of His resurrection life. But the question will arise as to the internal constitution of the Church. If absent in Heaven and invisible to all, how can His will be made known to His children, that all may act together with Him? This necessarily leads to some consideration of the Church in its internal relations to its Head as presented to us in the Scriptures.

All Christians agree that the Lord makes known His will through the Holy Spirit sent by Him. As He said: "He shall guide you into all the truth; for He shall not speak from Himself, but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak. . . . He shall take of Mine and declare it unto you" (John 16: 13-). But how should He speak? How make known to the Church the mind of the Lord? It was by utterances through men. So were Saul and Barnabas separated (Acts 13: 2). We know from the Gospels how it was done. We know that the Holy Spirit spake at the first through men inspired by Him, for all might prophesy, or through ordained prophets, speaking in the various churches (1 Cor. 14: 5). But as prophets may

speak out of their own hearts, these many prophetic utterances must be judged, as declared by St. John: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God" (1 John 4: 1). This could not be done by every individual member according to his measure of spiritual discernment. There must, therefore, be another and higher ministry to prove the spirits, and determine what utterances were of the Holy Spirit, and deliver these only to the churches. This higher ministry was the apostolic. To it, the gift of spiritual discernment was given in largest measure, and, therefore, the Apostle Paul could give direction as to the right use of prophecy, and generally of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14).

Thus, through these two ministries of apostles and prophets, the mind of the Lord, both as regards the doctrine and the order and work of the Church, was to be made known. But there is a distinction between apostolic and prophetic inspiration that is to be carefully noted. Through the prophet, the Holy Spirit speaks from time to time in audible and intelligible words. He is conscious of a power not his own coming upon him, and impelling him to utterance; and when the power ceases, he is silent. He has, for the time, fulfilled his ministry. It is not for him to interpret his own words. In the apostolic ministry, another form of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is seen. The apostle speaks and acts in the

administration of his office in the conscious use of all his powers; but in all his apostolic work, he is so illumined and guided by the Spirit, that he can at all times speak the true word, and fulfil the work given him to do. In the prophetic ministry, the Holy Spirit speaks by the man; in the apostolic, the man speaks and acts in the light and power of the Spirit. He does not, like the prophet, wait for a special spiritual impulse, but so has the mind of Christ, through the indwelling Spirit, as at all times to know His will and what He would have him to do. It will be noted that we are here speaking of these ministries as perfectly fulfilled.

Thus the inspiration of the apostle is larger and higher than that of the prophet. This presents no difficulty to those who recognise several orders of ministry, and that the Spirit is given to each according to its measure. As Jesus knew the mind of the Father through the Spirit given Him without measure, so the apostle through the Spirit knows the mind of Christ. His inspiration is in kind like that of the Lord when on earth. And yet this ministry is not of itself sufficient. It is closely connected with that of the prophet. The light given to the latter is to be made use of by the former. The prophet speaks the word of knowledge; the apostle, the word of wisdom, and wisdom is the right application of knowledge, and therefore, of higher importance (1 Cor. 12: 8). The Church has need of immediate and constant

guidance, and this is the guidance of the Head through the apostolic ministry, as aided by the prophetic. To the former, it belongs to interpret the prophetic utterances and to apply them practically to the needs of the Church.

Under the old covenant, the will of God was made known through men inspired of Him, and through visible symbols, as the Urim and Thummim. But there is this great point of difference between the knowledge given under the old covenant and under the new. The prophets of the old dispensation constituted no ministry, or permanent order, but in the Christian Church the ordained prophet is, next to the apostle, the highest minister. The Holy Spirit can now speak through ordained prophets, and in all the churches, and His words serve for edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). The Head being Himself man can now take men chosen by Him unto such near and permanent fellowship with Himself as was not possible before. An apostolic ministry could not be set until Christ was made the Head of the Church. Apostles can be taken into His secret counsels, and as He was sent by the Father into the world to make Him known, so can He send them to declare Him to men.

It is through these two ministries, one chosen directly by the Head, and representing His authority; the other speaking under the immediate

inspiration of the Spirit, that the mind of the Lord is made known to the members of His body. As has been said by another, "The two witnesses, whereby God testifies in His Church concerning the truth to men, are (1) The Holy Ghost employing the faculties of the redeemed and regenerated man; and (2) The redeemed and regenerate man, speaking in the exercise of his understanding, but with the inspiration of the Holy Ghost."

This work of the Lord by the Church, Himself abiding in the Heavens, continues till the number of those who shall be its members is completed. Then follows their change into His own likeness by resurrection or translation, and the marriage of the Lamb, when He, with them, enters upon the last stage of His redemptive work, the glorified Church co-working with Him.

Having spoken of the manner in which the mind of the Head is made known to the Church, through its ministers, we turn to the point of authority. It is said of the Lord when on earth, "He taught them as one having authority" (Matt. 7: 29), and it is so to-day. Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, is its ruler, not the Holy Spirit. The Head appoints His ministers, the Spirit endows them, and prepares them for those offices to which the Lord through Him calls them. No man can take office in the Church to himself in his own right (Heb. 5: 4). The Lord must both choose him and give him His authority.

Ordinarily He makes known His choice through the Holy Spirit speaking by the prophet; He ordains and gives authority through the apostle. Thus the apostleship is the centre of authority; His will is declared by it, and His rule of action for all. This relation of apostles to prophets is set forth by St. Peter calling upon those to whom he writes to "remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles" (2 Peter 3: 2; 1 Cor. 14: 37). The Church has no inherent authority either to teach or to rule. The wife is to be subject to her husband in everything, as the Church is subject to her Head (Eph. 5: 24).

From the relation of these two ministries to the Head and to one another, we see the ground of their importance as declared by St. Paul in his Epistles: "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets" (1 Cor. 12: 28), "He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets" (Eph. 4: 11). Again He speaks of the household of God as "built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2: 20).

The question arises, "How does the Head convey His resurrection or supernatural life?" It is by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in the appointed ordinances—born of water and the Spirit. He is the Vine, and those made partakers of His life are the branches. The

nourishment of this life, and its full development, are through the operations of the Spirit in other ordinances, especially in that of the Lord's Supper. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life. . . . [He] abideth in me, and I in him" (John 6: 54-56). The supernatural life demands supernatural food. There are other appointments by which this life is developed and strengthened, and there are spiritual gifts and endowments of powers, which enable His children to do His works. The Church in its whole constitution is supernatural, because of its relation to the supernatural Head.

But into details we need not here enter. Material elements, bread and wine, water, oil, are through the operation of the Holy Spirit made means of spiritual blessing.¹

We may here ask, What is the relation of this new resurrection life to death? The Head raised from the dead cannot die any more, death hath no more dominion over Him. But those made partakers of His life during His absence do die. The ground of this is that by Divine appointment the new life which embraces the body cannot be

¹ The relation of the ordinances for the giving and nourishing of the supernatural life, to those appointed for the natural life, will not escape notice. In creating, God said: "Let the waters bring forth . . . the moving creature that hath life." In like way, the new life begins in the waters of baptism. And as bread and wine nourish the natural life in its highest form, so bread and wine are the appointed food for those called by the Lord to eat at His table.

perfected in any till the hour of translation or resurrection. We must see Him as He is, to be made like Him. It is said by St. Paul, "The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8: 2, R. V.). The law of the new life in Christ is a life over which death has no authority, but all the regenerate, having now the first-fruits of the Spirit, are waiting for the redemption of the body (Rom. 8: 23). Not till the Lord returns can "mortality be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5: 4). All power in Heaven and in earth is His, "but now we see not yet all things put under Him" (Heb. 2: 8). The hour of His kingdom is not yet come.

It is to be noted that though death, as a reality, is not yet set aside in the Church, there is an ordinance appointed for the healing of the sick, to be administered by the elders of every local church. There was nothing of this kind among the Jewish ordinances, for the life of the Risen One had not then been given to any. This new life in us now struggles against the law of sin and death. The Apostle says, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5: 4, R. V.).

Every form of life seeks its consummation, so most of all the new life given us in regeneration.

CHAPTER XVII

THE KINGDOM

Part I.—Its Nature

WE here enter the region of the yet unfulfilled purpose of God, and known to us only through prophecy. There is, therefore, no general agreement as to the nature or order of the events yet to take place, except in general that Christ will return to earth as the Judge and King, and having put all things under Him, give up the redemptive Kingdom to the Father. But His own prophetic utterances and those of inspired men, interpreted in harmony with God's actings in the past, are sufficient to give warrant to an attempt to outline the work the Redeemer has yet to do before redemption is accomplished.

From this point of view, we may define the Kingdom period as the last stage of the Son's redemptive work; when it is ended, He gives up the Kingdom to the Father, and the Eternal Age begins (1 Cor. 15: 28). The dominant feature of this period is the visible exercise on earth of that authority which was given Him before He ascended (Matt. 28: 18; 25: 31).

It is of great importance in this enquiry as to the nature and purpose and time of the Kingdom, to keep clearly in mind that the Church is an election, as the Jews were from among the nations, some taken from the many for a special purpose. These so taken constitute the body of Christ, the instrument through which He acts upon others; and they are, as an election, a defined and limited number. The gathering of these is not the end, but a means to the end. When the full number has been gathered, and prepared, and fully united to the Head in resurrection life, the Church period, distinctively so-called, comes to its end and a new period begins. Now the Lord proceeds to the manifestation of His authority, or takes His great power, and reigns (Rev. 11: 17), the members of His body, made like Him, serving as His kings and priests.

But the work of redemption is not ended with the assumption of His kingly power; only a new phase of it is begun. The union of the Church with Christ in resurrection life, or, in symbolic terms, "the marriage of the Lamb," is a necessary preliminary to the establishment of the Kingdom. As this election is from all nations, the Gospel is to be preached to all (Rev. 5: 9).

That the present Church period is the Kingdom period, or, in other words, that Christ at His Ascension entered upon His functions as King, is a very general belief. It is true that

before His Ascension He said of Himself, "All authority hath been given unto Me in Heaven, and upon earth" (Matt. 28: 18, R. V.), and upon this ground He commands the Gospel to be preached to all. But those are yet to be gathered who shall rule with Him. He is made "Head over all things to the Church" (Eph. 1: 22). He now rules over all with reference to the gathering of the Church, but not till this election is completed does it rule with Him.¹

Part II.—The Preparation

It is necessary, also, in this enquiry to distinguish the Lord's acts preparatory to the establishment of the Kingdom, and His acts in its

¹ The identification of the Church and the Kingdom has been the source of many evils. It has greatly lowered the standard of the spiritual life. Instead of sitting patiently in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, waiting for His manifestation of Himself as King, the great ambition of the Church has been, at least in its larger divisions, to take its place among the kingdoms of this world, and be a Power in the earth, and rule over the nations. The end being worldly, the means used are necessarily worldly. The Lord said: "My Kingdom is not of this world," or of this cosmos,—this present sinful order of which Satan is the prince. "If My Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight" (John 18: 36). To obliterate the line of distinction between the sacred and the secular, between this age and the age to come, between the Church and the world, is a most efficacious means of hindering the Lord in His redemptive work, where the perfection of the lower is a necessary step to the higher. The King cannot come till the Bride is perfected, and ready for the marriage (Eph. 5: 27; Rev. 19: 7).

administration when established—the two stages of His work, the Judicial and the Kingly—and to note their relation to each other.

We may first consider the necessity of a preparation for the Kingdom and its ground. It may be asked, Why a preparation? The answer is that the Church has never been spiritually ready for the return of her Head and for the part she is to take with Him in His future work. The Lord in His teaching laid great stress on the readiness of His disciples to receive Him at His return (Luke 12: 35, 36), and set forth its absolute necessity in the parable of the Virgins (Matt. 25). This watchfulness and readiness were not the duty of a few only, but of all (Mark 13: 35-37), and the full means of preparation were provided for in the original constitution of the Church. All are to go on unto perfection, the perfection of one stage being readiness for the next (Matt. 5: 48; Heb. 6: 1). Only if ready, can they be translated in a moment, and brought into the fulness of eternal life, and be made kings and priests. If any are found unprepared, like the foolish Virgins, it will be through their own unfaithfulness (see Malachi 3: 2).

The Church, as Christ's body, having in it the fulness of life, and all organs for its manifestation, if it abide in Him, is a perfect school of Christian culture. It has everything needful that its members may attain unto individual perfection, and

to such unity that all can be presented as one body unto Christ (Eph. 4: 11, 12). In other words, the perfecting of the Church is the attainment of that spiritual condition which makes it ready for the coming of the Lord (Eph. 1: 13, 14). But this is possible only by the operation of the Holy Spirit through all the ordinances and ministries of the Church (Eph. 4: 16).

It necessarily follows that if, through unbelief and separation from the Head, the appointed means of perfecting its members are partially wanting, or inoperative, the Holy Spirit cannot do His perfect work. No one can by any efforts of his own supply these means. As the wheat must be ripened by the sun and the rain, so must the Christian be perfected through the spiritual action upon him of the Head and the Spirit.

But if His children are imperfect, or not ready, the Lord is hindered in His action, He cannot come to take them into the fellowship of His glory. His coming must be their condemnation and judgment, and must, therefore, be delayed until the due preparation is made. But how can it be made? If it can be made only through the Divinely appointed means, and some of these are wanting, they must be restored that through them a company, greater or smaller, may be prepared.

We find here the explanation of the term "first-fruits," as a company first prepared for the Lord.

As in gathering the harvest, the first step under the Law was the plucking of a few ripe stalks, and presenting them to the Lord in His Temple, before the reaping could begin, so with the spiritual harvest of the Lord (Lev. 23: 9-). He gathers His sheaf of first-fruits and presents it before the Father, and then the harvest can begin (Rev. 14: 4). This law as to the first-fruits rests upon the principle that the first in a series of God's gifts to us is to be consecrated to Him, we by this act acknowledging Him as the giver of all and sanctifying the residue. The first-fruits of a tree, the first-born of the cattle, and the first-born son were His, and by the presentation of the first to Him, all that followed were consecrated (Ex. 22: 29; Num. 15: 20; Neh. 10: 35). A commentator says: "No ordinance appears to have been more distinctly recognised than this."

Thus in the harvest at the end, God will have His sheaf of first-fruits—those first spiritually ripened. Of these the Lord speaks, "One shall be taken"—the ripened one—and "one shall be left"—the unripened (Matt. 24: 40). Also in the parable of the Ten Virgins we are taught that five being ready are admitted at once, and five not ready are shut out. The ready ones are those of whom He speaks elsewhere as "worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass" (Luke 21: 36). In the Revelation, the first-fruits are mentioned as those escaping the great

tribulation, and in contrast with those who pass through it and wash their defiled robes (Rev. 7).

It is wholly in correspondence with the Divine appointments under the old covenant that we are told of "the first-fruits" of the Church (Rev. 14: 4). These are the first ripened ones, and as such objects of God's special desire: "My soul desired the first-ripe fruit" (Micah 7: 1). They are the first gathered, and thus "escape the things which shall come to pass" (Luke 21: 36; Rev. 7: 4).

The first-fruits having been taken to stand before the Son of Man, the Lord can proceed to gather the harvest; but the yet unripened fruits must be ripened. And this is effected, not by the normal use of the Divine means, but by sore judgments (Isa. 1: 25). Into details we need not enter. The Apostle Paul tells us of "the fire that shall try every man's work"; if he has builded upon the rock, wood, hay, stubble, though his work shall be burned, the builder shall be saved, yet so as by fire (1 Cor. 3: 13-15). By "the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning" will God purify His children (1 Cor. 3: 13; Mal. 3: 2; Isa. 4: 4). The same truth is set forth in the call to the angel to reap: "Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe"; in the margin, "dried." It indicates a ripening not normal, but effected through adventitious influences (Rev. 14: 15).

The perfecting of the first-fruits is simply the

attainment of that spiritual condition that is expected of all in Christ (1 Cor. 1:8; Rev. 14:4, 5). There is not the setting up of some new and ideal standard at the end, but the standard set at the first for all, to which it is their duty to attain; and no means of attaining are given but those originally given.

We thus find in the Church just before the Lord's return three classes: (a) those loving the Lord's appearing and waiting for it, but unconscious of their own unpreparedness, and not realising the need of any special preparation; (b) those who retain a greater or less measure of faith in Christ as their Saviour and of zeal for Him, and who think to set up His Kingdom by their own labours before His return, but without unity of doctrine or of action; (c) those apostate in spirit, openly or secretly denying the Lord. These classes must be separated, and all in whom faith can be awakened must be prepared.

The first class mentioned is the first to be prepared—the first-fruits of the harvest—and is prepared by the Lord through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the appointed Divine ministries and ordinances, of which they are made to see the necessity. They are thus brought into that condition of spiritual ripeness in which the Lord can gather them.

The Apostles saw very early that till this condition of spirit was attained, the coming of the

Lord must be delayed; and there was, therefore, a corresponding change in the tone of their teaching. The looking for death now took the place of the hope of translation and resurrection. How long this spiritual unpreparedness, and consequent delay of the Lord's return, would continue, the Apostles knew not. But St. Paul saw in it the beginning of the apostacy, and that it would find its culmination in the Antichrist.

The second class pass through the great tribulation, and see their structures of wood, hay, stubble, burn, but are themselves saved, "yet so as through fire." These constitute the harvest—"a great multitude, which no man could number" (Rev. 7: 9; 14: 15-).

The third class, those alienated in spirit from the Lord, are prepared to follow the Antichrist when he shall appear, and will join themselves to him and perish with him. It is this class which is presented to us under the symbol of "the vine of the earth" (Rev. 14: 18), whose clusters are gathered, and "cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God."

Whilst this process of preparing the Lord's own is going on, Satan is also preparing his own—the Beast and his armies. More and more, the chasm between the followers of Christ and the followers of Satan deepens and widens, and an organised antichristian world-power comes more and more clearly into view (Rev. 13: 1). Finally

the Antichrist appears, the lawless one, the man of sin, he to whom the prince of this world gives his power and great authority, "whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2: 9). Around him gather all the disobedient and unholy. Into his hand it is given "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them"; and "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb" (Rev. 13: 7, 8). But his reign is short; the Lord appears, and with the breath of His mouth and with the brightness of His coming the Beast and false prophet are taken and cast into the lake of fire, and their armies are slain (Rev. 19: 20-). Satan is bound and cast into the abyss. The last of the ante-Kingdom judgments is then upon the nations, those who have joined themselves to the Antichrist (Matt. 25: 31, 32).

We find in this judicial and preparatory stage three successive steps: the gathering of the first-fruits, the harvest, and the vintage.

How long a time will be occupied in this preparation for His Kingdom, first of the first-fruits and then of the harvest, and of His judgments upon the Beast and false prophet, cannot be said, but probably a considerable number of years. Nor can the exact order of events be determined, nor any precise line separating the Lord's earlier judicial from His later kingly functions. Per-

haps, indeed, the whole Kingdom period may be in a limited sense one of judgment—that is, of separating the good from the evil, the final act of separation not taking place till the end (Rev. 20: 11).

That the time of preparation for the Kingdom, or the judicial work of the Lord, will be a time of great trial to all the unprepared, the prophetic Scriptures everywhere affirm. This is the time so often mentioned as “the last days,” or in a comprehensive term, “the day of the Lord.” Scarcely an Old Testament prophet can be found who does not speak of this great and dreadful day, “the day of vengeance,” “the day of His fierce anger,” “the day of wrath” (Isa. 61: 2; 63: 4; Joel 1: 15; Isa. 13: 13; Rev. 6: 17).

How terrible is this day, is shown in our Lord’s words: “There shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, to this time, no, nor ever shall be, and except these days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” (Matt. 24: 21, 22). This “day of judgment” is set in contrast with “the day of redemption.” The time of tribulation is to the faithful in the Church at the end of her earthly history what Gethsemane was to the Lord at the end of His life on earth—the most searching proof of man’s trust in God, the final trial of faith, a time of deepest darkness, when God seems to

have forsaken His children. Out of the depths will they cry: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Yet will faith prevail, and their Lord will hear their cry, and appear suddenly for their deliverance.

Part III.—Its Administration

Having considered the preparation for the Kingdom, we turn to its actual establishment. But we must first ask in what sense the term "kingdom" is here used.

We know that in general, every national government, without distinction of form, is called in the Scriptures a kingdom, as the Assyrian, the Persian; only the Messianic Kingdom embraces all nations. But we are here concerned with the distinction between the ruling power in a kingdom and its subjects. In the Lord's Prayer we say, "Thy Kingdom come"—the full exercise of His authority, the will of God perfectly done. The Lord says to the saved nations: "Come, . . . inherit the Kingdom." This, however, does not mean participation in its rule. To "inherit the Messianic Kingdom" was a Jewish formula meaning to partake of the blessings of its rule (G. T. *Lex.*)—to be its subjects, not its kings or priests (Matt. 25: 34). In Christ's Kingdom, all obedient nations will partake of its blessings, but the Church only is called to sit with Him in His throne, and to take part with Him in the administration of

His government. Her sons, now glorified and immortal, may be His kings and priests—kings as helpers in His rule, priests as His ministers in worship.

It is in itself probable that those who on earth have filled the highest places in His service, and have been obedient and faithful, will fill the highest places in the Kingdom. An illustration of this is seen in the promise of the Lord to His apostles: "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19: 28; Luke 22: 30). But to take part in His rule is given in its measure to all. "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ" (Rev. 20: 4). In a vision, St. John saw "round about the throne four and twenty thrones, and upon the thrones four and twenty elders sitting . . . and on their heads crowns of gold" (Rev. 4: 4). St. Paul speaks of the crown of righteousness to be given him, and not to him only, "but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 9; 1 Peter 5: 4). All in Christ constitute the "royal priesthood."

That the Christian Church is to take part with her Head in the administration of His government, and that her sons will be kings and priests under Him, is a truth so often and explicitly declared that we need not dwell upon it here. "To sit on my right hand and on my left hand, is not

mine to give, but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father" (Matt. 20: 23, R. V). The Jews, as God's holy covenant people, believed themselves chosen to this high position. They were "the sons of the Kingdom" (Matt. 8: 12) and expected to reign with the Messiah over the nations. When they rejected Him, and would not have Him to reign over them, they lost as a people their pre-eminent position: this was to be taken by His Church, His body. As made like Him in resurrection or translation, His children could be His helpers, His kings and priests.

This participation in His future rule was used by the Lord Himself as an incentive to faithfulness and diligence in the parables of the Pounds and the Talents (Luke 19: 17; Matt. 25: 21). Of those abiding in Him, the branches in the Vine, the measure of judgment is not their salvation, for this is assured, but the manner in which they have served the Lord on the earth. All who have been faithful in the few things He has entrusted to them, He will make rulers over many things—"To every man according to his work" (Psa. 62: 12). To one to rule over five cities, to another to rule over ten. The highest places will be given to the worthiest. As in an earthly kingdom the king has many of various ranks taking part with him in his rule, so is it with the Lord in His Kingdom.

Part IV.—The Church, The Jews, and The Nations

During this period, we meet three classes: the Church, the Jews, and the nations. Let us consider the place of each, and, first, of the Church.

Several questions here meet us. Where dwell the Lord and His Church?

As the saints are in their resurrection bodies, which, as we have seen, though heavenly, are material, they have a local habitation, but where we are not told. But we must believe that it is upon the earth, or closely connected with the earth. St. Paul speaks of the dead in Christ, and those living at His coming as caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and adds, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4: 17). The Lord is returning to the earth, His saints meet Him in the air, certainly not there to remain. Does He with them return into Heaven, or come with them to the earth? The latter only is in accordance with the fact of His manhood, and with the whole course of His earlier manifestations as preparatory to His Incarnation. There has been a visible Divine Presence in earth from the beginning; first, in theophanies and symbols, and culminating in the Word made flesh, the Son of the Virgin. Here on earth He was born and lived. To it He promises to return. Here He has a great work still to do.

Will He disdain to come to the place of His birth, to the home of His childhood, to the

Mount from which He ascended to His Holy City? And the glorified saints with Him are human, the earth is their home. All the associations of their lives are here; are these to be obliterated? Why be taken to some unknown world?

It has already been noted that the Lord speaks of many mansions, or abiding-places, in His Father's house, and adds: "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also." This seems clearly to affirm a local habitation. He departs from the earth and returns to it, and here receives them to Himself. This implies that at His return, He will have a place prepared for them as distinguished from others, one corresponding to their new resurrection life. It is true we cannot tell where the dwelling-place of the Lord and His Church may be during the Kingdom period, nor the manner of their life. But there are many mysteries which we believe but cannot explain, as the ever-present ones of the union of body and spirit, and the place and manner of the life of the disembodied.

We may at this point direct our attention to the physical changes, already spoken of, that may take place in the earth before and during the Kingdom period. That the creation shall be "delivered from the bondage of corruption" we are assured by the Apostle (Rom. 8: 21), and in

the Revelation we are told, "He that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." When does this process of new material creation begin? We may believe that it began in a special sense when the Lord began His preparation for His return. When on earth, looking forward to His work in the Kingdom, He speaks of "the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory" (Matt. 19: 28).

This clearly intimates that the process of new creation begins with the Kingdom. In Acts (3: 21) mention is made of "the times of restitution [R. V., *restoration*] of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets." This restitution is doubtless the same as making all things new, and is a progressive work. Its first stage may begin with the resurrection, when the heavenly life is manifested on the earth (Rom. 8: 19). Mention is also made of "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3: 19) as preparatory.

We are to note that there is distinct mention of physical changes to take place at Jerusalem at the Lord's return. "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives . . . and [it] shall cleave in the midst thereof . . . and there shall be a very great valley. . . . All the land shall be turned as a plain" (Zech. 14). Whether changes like these extend to other regions we cannot say.

Of the details of the worship offered to the Father by the Church during the Kingdom we cannot speak, but it being offered by the Head as the High Priest, and by His glorified saints, is the highest that can be offered. That during this period there may be different forms of worship, according to the relations in which the worshippers stand to God, is seen in the fact that the present worship of unfallen angels must differ in important particulars from that of redeemed men. The worship of the Church glorified may differ, then, in various points from that of the Jews, and that of the Jews from that of the nations, yet all have the same fundamental principles, many common rites, and one High Priest. We may recall the words of the Saviour at the last Passover Supper, "I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God" (Mark 14: 25; Luke 22: 30). Christ is He through whom, as High Priest and Leader, all worshippers must approach the Father. That the nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship, and to keep certain feasts, we are told by the prophet Zechariah (Zech. 14). But there will also doubtless be places of worship in their own lands, worship fitted to their stage of religious development.

A question here naturally arises as to the intercourse between the risen and glorified saints and the Jews, and all still remaining in mortal

bodies. It is difficult for us to think of meeting disembodied spirits without a feeling of repulsion, if not of fear. They seem to us to be of another order of beings, and we shrink from the thought of familiar communion. But this will not extend to those in glorified bodies. When mortality is swallowed up of life, those yet mortal, so far from being repelled, will be irresistibly attracted, for they will see in the risen and immortal ones the fulness of life, and the perfection of strength and beauty. We may thus well understand how Mount Zion, or wherever the glorified saints may dwell, will be the place to which those still under the law of death will throng, and find in it not only holiness and peace, but also such material magnificence and splendour as befits the residence of the great King and Image of God.

We note, next, the place of the Jews in the Kingdom. This is intermediate between that of the Church and that of the nations. The first step is their restoration to their own land, or, rather, God's land (Lev. 25: 23). How this will be effected we know not in detail, but in general that it will be through wonderful revelations of the Lord in His actings toward them, awakening in them the consciousness of their covenant standing, and working faith in Him as their Messiah. That the tribal organisation will be restored seems to be clearly affirmed, thus establishing a commonwealth, rather than a mon-

archy with an earthly head. But on this point nothing positive can be said. As the Church has its King, Ruler over all, so the Jews may have a son of David as their prince (Ezek. 44: 3; 45: 16).

From the Church, through its ministers, the Jews learn the mind of the Lord, and make this known to the nations (Isa. 2: 2). The duties assigned to them at the first as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," though these are now fulfilled in their full measure in the glorified Church, may still be performed by them in a secondary degree. To the Temple at Jerusalem come the nations, probably in their representatives, to worship at the appointed times, and there is fulfilled the prophecy: "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56: 7).

Let us note, finally, the place of "the nations." This term is sometimes applied in prophecy to all, irrespective of religion; often to those which have been professedly Christian, but who, having apostatised, have joined the antichristian confederacy (Rev. 17: 17; 18: 3; Ps. 2: 1). These nations are those spoken of by the Lord: "Ye shall be hated of all the nations for My name's sake" (R. V., Matt. 24: 9). It is these nations which He will judge when He takes the Kingdom (Rev. 2: 26; Matt. 25: 34-). These constitute the greater part of the armies of the Antichrist, and will be destroyed by the Lord (Rev. 19: 15). This is the

great judicial separation preparatory to the Kingdom—the gathering out of the tares (Matt. 13: 40).

But besides these apostate Christian nations, there will be at the time of the Lord's return many peoples to whom the Gospel has been partially preached, and who have some imperfect knowledge of Christ; and there will be others to whom He is fully unknown. What means God will use to bring these to the knowledge of His truth, and to faith and obedience, we cannot say; but it is evident that the gathering of the Jews to their own land, scattered as they are over all the earth, must be known to all, and will have a powerful influence in teaching the Divine purpose. And there will doubtless be added the witness of Jewish evangelists. Besides this, the coming of the Lord in His Kingdom of glory and power cannot be hidden from any. All who dwell in the earth will know that One has come who is King over all.

One of the first acts of the Lord in the setting up of the Kingdom is the binding of Satan, the prince of "this world"—or of the present unnatural order of the Cosmos,—that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be finished. What change this cessation of all forms of Satanic activity will make in the spiritual condition of the world may be conceived by those who know how mighty is the kingdom of darkness. But it is not the final end

of his hostility. He is cast into the abyss, but not into the place of final and eternal punishment—the lake of fire (Rev. 20: 7-10), whither the Beast and false prophet have preceded him.

Why he should be loosed from the abyss, and be permitted to tempt and deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, may seem strange to us, but may, perhaps, be understood if it be taken in connection with what we are taught elsewhere of the great trial of our humanity, that God will have all its secret tendencies to evil, and its deep-seated hostility to Divine rule, brought to light. Not only was the Son in Person rejected when on earth, and His Church rejected in its ministry, but even now, after the glorious revelations in His Kingdom, there are those also who dare to compass “the camp of the saints about and the beloved city” (Rev. 20: 9)—probably the earthly Jerusalem. It is the last but vain attempt of Satan to regain his place as the prince of this world. As the brighter the material light, the deeper the darkness, so is it in the spiritual world. The clearer the manifestation of the Divine and holy, the more intense is the aversion to it on the part of those who hate the light because their deeds are evil.

How the rule of the Lord will be administered over the nations during the Kingdom, we are not told, except in general that it will be through the

Jews (Isa. 2: 2; Zech. 8: 3). Now under the rule of the Prince of Peace, war will be unknown, national strife will cease, and race antipathies, the contests of labour and capital, of the poor and the rich, will be known no more. Everywhere social order and harmony will prevail, and the prophecy spoken to Abraham of old will be fulfilled: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22: 18).

But we are to keep in mind that the necessary and ordinary pursuits of life do not cease—the industrial, the commercial, the scientific, the artistic, the literary. During all the period of the Kingdom, we shall still be in the redemptive stage, and as now all lawful occupations will be carried on, but in all, the love of God will rule, every one seeking the good of others no less than his own. In brief, the injunction will be fulfilled by all: "whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." There is a false spirituality which would narrow down all the actings of men in the age to come to acts of worship. We are not so taught. The powers of man, as given him by God at his creation, are to be developed to the highest degree, and find abundant scope for their exercise in every form. The finite creation will never exhaust the Infinite.

A few words may be said as to the place of death during the Kingdom period.

We are told by the Apostle St. Paul that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15: 26). It is after the last judgment that death and hell are cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20: 14). It is certain, then, that there will be some in the disembodied state down to the time when the Son delivers up the Kingdom to the Father. Those whom the Lord has gathered, and made partakers of His resurrection life, and are made His helpers in the administration of His Kingdom, do not here come into consideration. The question is, then, Does death continue among the Jews after their restoration? We can scarcely doubt this. It follows as a legitimate inference that if certain ones are mentioned as being delivered from the law of death, in the first resurrection (Rev. 20: 4, 5), all others continue under that law; and to this conclusion we are led by the words of prophecy (Isa. 65: 20). Without attempting to interpret these words, there seems to be an obvious reference to patriarchal longevity, and also that death during the Kingdom period will not be as now accompanied with anguish of body and of mind. It is said that "the voice of weeping shall be no more heard . . . nor the voice of crying (Isa. 65: 19). (Reference to this longevity may be seen in Zech. 8: 4; Ps. 92: 10-14.)

We conclude, then, that, to the Jewish people, life will be greatly prolonged during the Kingdom period, but the law of death will not be set aside

till their part in the work of redemption is ended. If not set aside with them, much less among the nations.

It is held by distinguished scientists that there is a slow but steady change going on in the material constitution of the earth through the impartation of new energy, and some affirm that this change "is constructive." One, Professor Ramsay, suggests that through the impartation of such energy to the living cells, human life may be much prolonged. If this be accepted, we have a possible explanation of the prolonged lives of the patriarchs—the energised elements imparting new strength. These long lives leading to pride and wickedness, God so changed the relation of the elements that the same degree of energy was not given, and human life was greatly shortened. Some commentators have said that this shortening of human life is spoken of and its term given as one hundred and twenty years (Gen. 6: 3). This could be understood only as a general limit, since Abraham lived one hundred and seventy-five years, but Moses only one hundred and twenty, and Joshua one hundred and ten.

It is possible that continued scientific investigation and a profounder knowledge of material forces may go far to make credible the biblical statements which have seemed to many incredible.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NEW CREATION

THE work of redemption being completed, all rebellion suppressed, and all things subjected to the Father, then shall the Son also be subject unto Him, "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15: 28). That a change then takes place in the economic relation of God to His Incarnate Son, and so to men, seems to be affirmed; but the nature of that change is not clear. The most obvious and generally accepted interpretation is, that it refers to the giving up of the mediatorial or redemptive Kingdom. Some have said that the words teach us that the office of the Son, as the Image of God, and His Revealer, will be no more needed, or, in other words, that the Incarnation will come to an end. No mediation will be longer necessary; God and man are now brought into immediate communion. But this interpretation has always been regarded by the Church as conflicting with the teachings of the Scriptures respecting the relations of the Infinite Creator to His finite creatures. As Incarnate Son, He is God's Revealer, and Visible Image,

and Supreme Ruler, during all ages. His words ever remain true: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

But we turn from this to the Son's work in the New Creation.

The foundation of the New Creation was laid in the Resurrection of the Lord. As the first creation was to correspond to the conditions of the natural life, so the new to the conditions of the supernatural life. Always and everywhere in God's realms, the external is fitted to the internal, the body to the spirit, the dwelling-place to the body. The new life demands a new earth. It is not necessary to suppose any new material elements, but only a rearrangement of the old. As has been already said, in the worlds as made, such properties were given to matter as would serve to the full execution of the Divine purpose; and hidden forces, which would come into play as that purpose went on. Some of these forces have been discovered, especially in the later centuries—gravitation, electricity, magnetism, the luminiferous ether,—but doubtless many remain hidden.

We have not, then, to believe in the creation of any new matter or new forces. The process of the New Creation involves only new combinations of the existing elements, resulting in new substances with new qualities; and in the unloosing of the hidden forces. What power man has

through artificial combinations, we see in the terrible explosives of modern science. What power then, has the Son of God to make all things new.¹

Several questions meet us. First, when did the new creation begin? We may note the five successive stages of its progress.

- a. Its foundation laid in the resurrection of the Lord, "the heavenly Man."
- b. The new, supernatural life given to His members. The Church as His body.
- c. Their life completed and perfected in the resurrection.
- d. The place prepared by the Lord for His risen and glorified saints.
- e. The new earth and heaven.

The new creation began with the supernatural or resurrection life, as existing in the risen Lord. He was the Adam of the new creation, and this life is in all His members. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature [or a new creation]; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (2 Cor. 5: 17). We see thus that the new creation began in the Head of the Church,

¹ The important part which heat plays in dissolving existing combinations of the chemical elements and in the formation of new, all know. We see in St. Peter's words that fire is to play a great part in the new creation: "The elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat" (2 Peter 3: 10). Through the dissolution of the old and formation of new combinations, will the new heavens and earth be made. Apparently nothing is annihilated and nothing created.

and that it is continued in all that are in Him. It is not yet manifested, but hidden in Christ. This manifestation will be made with them, as with the Lord, in the resurrection. Then the world will see in the persons of the risen ones what the new creation is in its highest form. But a further stage remains. The heavens and earth are to be made new. The supernatural life will have its corresponding environment. We cannot say how far the process of the material new creation may be carried on in the earth during the Kingdom period, but it will not be perfected till redemption has been completed, all men have been judged, and all things brought under subjection to the Father.

Another question meets us: Will the process of new creation be confined to the earth, or extend to all worlds? This is one that must be left unanswered. But if, as has been said, angels and men are the only reasonable beings as yet created and all worlds but the earth are yet unpeopled, we must ask as to the nature of the life of their future inhabitants. It is morally certain that if these worlds are hereafter peopled, the life of their inhabitants will be of the highest type—the perfect; for this is most in accord with the Divine perfections, and with the place held by the Incarnate Son as the heavenly Man. To bring men into communion with Himself is the end of all God's creative acts, old and new.

Another question, Does the new creation embrace the angels? must also be left unanswered. As not subject to death, they cannot receive the new life through resurrection. Yet a change may come on them through Divine power, not setting aside their distinctive characteristics, but exalting them into a higher region of being, and bringing them into new relations to the glorified saints.

Regarding the old creation in the light of the new, we see how they stand related to one another. The old in the Divine purpose looked forward to man's trial, and was constituted accordingly. That trial being ended, and in the risen Son the source of a new and heavenly life being found, the new creation can begin. The Redeemer of the old is also the Creator of the new. What a wide and glorious vista now opens to our wondering eyes. We enter into the realm of immortal life. Now we can behold the full manifestation of the love of God to His children, the full fruition of that communion with Him which is given them through the Incarnate Son. Forever abiding in resplendent majesty, the visible Image of the invisible God, Supreme Ruler over all, the heavens shine with His glory. Now from Him through the Holy Spirit goes forth that new and Divine life which we may believe will in due time fill all habitable worlds with its holy and heavenly fruits. Countless orbs peopled with happy and sinless children,

the highest possible types of creature being, testify to the love of the Father, who knew the end from the beginning; and to the love of the Son, who, through the weakness and pain of mortal flesh, and the agony of Calvary, became the Heir and Lord of all. Is not such a Universe worthy of a God of all perfection?

If this be so, then the immensity of the Universe, that now bewilders and appalls us, will be the highest testimony to the goodness of God, and fill our hearts with thanksgiving and praise.

We thus see that the purpose of God in His universe, as it has been made known to us in the Scriptures, has the following stages: 1, creation of material worlds and reasonable beings; 2, the moral trial in Adam of these beings and their failure; 3, the work of redemption; 4, at its completion, the new creation. In carrying on the Divine purpose, the Son is the Father's agent. In the beginning, as the Word, He creates. When the creature has fallen through disobedience, He redeems him, giving Himself unto death. As the risen and supernatural Man, He creates anew. In all His work, creative and redemptive, He is the Revealer, the Representative of the Godhead, but redemption is an episode of comparatively brief duration, lying between creation and new creation.

We have now traced in outline the place of man in the universe as determined by the Incarnation.

We have seen that human nature is the highest form of creature being because it was the nature assumed by the Son of God. Will man rise to the dignity, the holiness, the blessedness of the place into which he is brought through the Incarnate Son?

CHAPTER XIX

CONCLUSION

THE trial of humanity, whether it will be subject to God or not, is not yet over. It now finds its highest, though not its final stage, in the trial of the Christian Church. Never has humanity been exalted so high in privilege and brought into such close communion with God, for the Head of the Church is the Incarnate Son, and the Holy Ghost dwells in her as in His temple. What holiness, what godly fear, what righteousness, what brotherly love, what unity and peace, should be seen in her! But as the Head was proved through temptation, so must the Church be. How has she borne the trial? Let her history answer. Does not this give us the crowning proof that no trust can be placed in the goodness of the creature? His children, even the most highly honoured and blest, have not risen to the greatness of God's purpose and fulfilled their calling. At best, they have been but unprofitable servants.

As this trial of the Church is still going on, we should carefully compare the present with the past that we may be prepared for the future.

It is not in the spirit of this writing to set forth the sins of the Church, much less to magnify them, or to disparage in any degree the grace of God as shown in its history, and in the faithful and holy lives of many of whom the world was not worthy. It was set by God to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, and it has never ceased to be such. But as it is possible that the light may become dim, and the salt lose its savour, we are permitted, nay, we are bound to note all departures from God's expressed will, all that dishonours the Head, and grieves the Holy Spirit. The Church is the light of the world, and the salt of the earth, only as she abides in Christ, her Head. Separate from Him, although but in part, there follow weakness, division, strife. The Head obscured, dishonoured, though acknowledged in word, faith fails, hope sickens, twilight comes down over Christendom. His children walk with bowed head amid graves, and worship in cold and darkened temples.

We may, therefore, ask what are the present relations of the Church to her Head? As the Incarnate Son is the instrument through which the Father acts, so the Church, His body, is the instrument through which the Son acts. We are therefore most deeply interested in its constitution as made by the Father and in its present condition. Can the Lord now work through it His perfect will?

Looking backward, we see a loving God ever desirous to manifest Himself to man, and man never able to rise into a full comprehension of the Divine way and appreciation of the Divine goodness. All human history shows how vain have been His attempts to reveal Himself as He would, through His Son, and to bring men into full communion with Him. Only a few in all generations have been able to apprehend, and to enter into, the Divine purpose, and to be workers together with the Son. Is it so to-day? All will admit that if we would be co-workers with God and Christ, we may not substitute our ways for the Divine ways, but must retain and diligently use all the means given us. If we cannot rise into the understanding of the Divine purpose, and by our faith lay hold of the means provided to attain its end, God cannot fulfil His promises, and the Church can never accomplish the work God has given it to do. And, more than this, if, through failure of faith, these promises are minimised, we descend from the heavenly region into the earthly and dwell in it as our home. It is as if the Jews in the wilderness had said, "This is the Promised Land; we will abide here." If the Church falls into the earthly sphere and is satisfied, our Lord cannot lead it onward. He is only nominally the Leader.

We may now ask: Is the Church working in the line of the Divine purpose? Does its faith make

God's promises realities? Is it fulfilling those functions to which it has been called? Of these we may mention the two chief ones already spoken of—the preaching of His Gospel and the joining in His intercession.

Of the preaching of the apostolic time, it is said: "They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed" (Mark 16: 20, R. V.). As He, when on earth, confirmed His own word by His work, so would He confirm the word of the Church. But we are told by all that the work is now unnecessary, the word is sufficient. The day of signs and wonders is past. We need make no appeal to the senses, we have entered into a higher plane, our appeals are to man's reason and conscience. The confirmation of the word by the signs following, we are told, was only for the apostolic age. But why thus limited? The work of redemption embraces the whole man, body, soul, and spirit, and wherever the redemptive word is preached, it should be confirmed by the redemptive work—healing of the sick, casting out of devils, utterance with new tongues. All these are external signs of the presence of the Divine power which is working unseen deliverance from sin in the spirit.

In all God's redemptive dealings with men, He has appealed to their senses, as well as to their reason. Of this the Old Testament gives

countless examples. Nor were these confined to the old covenant. No words of the martyr Stephen converted Saul, the Lord must appear visibly to him. The absence of the work, so far from being a proof of a higher plane of missionary operations, is rather a proof that the Lord is not confirming the word.

But let us ask further, whose word in the missionary work of to-day the Lord should confirm. We see in the missionary field many diverse sects, each striving to propagate its peculiar doctrines, and to build up its distinctive organisation. All preach in Christ's name, all claim His authority. Will He work alike with them all? We have, then, this dilemma: Either these differences of the doctrines preached are unimportant, or important. If unimportant, they dishonour the Lord by causing needless and harmful divisions in His Church; if important, they still more dishonour Him, since the sanction of His name is given to much false doctrine. And the heathen ask in perplexity, What is Christian truth? Which of its many sects truly represents Christianity?

Need we wonder that eighteen centuries have passed, and that Christianity, as regards the number of believers, has to-day but a secondary place among the religions of the world? The gates of hell can never prevail against the Church, but divided against itself, it can never accomplish the work given it by the Head. Unity with

Him, and unity among its members, are essential conditions of success.

The second great function of the Church is intercession. While the great High Priest in Heaven is offering His intercession, His children on the earth are to join with Him. The Church must know for what the Head is interceding, and make His intercession its own, and offer it with one heart and one voice. But neither of these conditions have been realised in the past. The Church, if in unity with the Head, cannot be divided against itself; and if so divided, cannot be in unity with its Head. Discordant sects cannot offer united prayer. The sectarian spirit, which ever seeks its own, will show itself in all their worship, and especially in the narrowness and meagreness of the prayers. A sect, however numerous, cannot enter into the largeness of Christ's intercession, the catholic and loving spirit is wanting. Wrapped up in its own selfish interests, and insensible to its own sin of division, there cannot be the sympathy with its Head, and with the trials and sorrows of their brethren, which is necessary to fulfil the priestly calling. It is in vain that the High Priest stands before the golden altar if the worshippers put no incense into His censer. He can pray for them, but not with them. His prayers are added as perfume to theirs, making them a sweet savour to God, but they cannot supply their place. We may not

fail to note that unity with its Head, and unity among its members, are as necessary to the Church in offering intercessions as in preaching the Gospel.

Another failure of faith is seen in the refusal to give the Incarnate Son His due place, as He to whom the Father has given authority over all. There is a practical denial of His rule both in the Church and in the State. The distinction between these two forms of rule has been already pointed out, and need not be dwelt on here. In the Church, His body, in which dwells the Holy Spirit, His rule is personal and absolute. No one can hold any office in it except through His appointment. But His rule in the State is providential, it is not His body, nor indwelt of the Spirit. He does not in any visible way appoint its rulers, but sets them in their place by His providence. The powers that be—those whom He permits to rule—are thus ordained of God. They are in a real sense His rulers.

In the Church, Christ's rule is so to be seen that there shall be no questions of authority arising among His ministers, no contention who is the greatest. There can be no self-appointed leader, dividing His children into rival and hostile sects (1 Cor. 1:12). The ordinance through which He makes known His will as to who shall serve Him, has been already spoken of. If it be lost through unbelief, unity of rule cannot be preserved. All leaders of factions will claim His authority, and

they who best represent the popular tendencies of their times will have most followers. To obey those set over them in the Lord, simply as His appointees, is already a strange and offensive doctrine to many.

If we turn to the State, we see, as a matter of fact, that very few rulers in Christendom give us any reason to believe that they recognise a King in Heaven. The title "King by the grace of God" may be retained in some states as a formula, but all civil history since the Lord ascended shows how little His supremacy has been practically regarded. And to-day it may be said that to most governments and peoples He is little more than a nonentity. No manifestation of His present will in human affairs, civil or ecclesiastical, is expected or desired.

Another illustration of the loss of faith is seen in the matter of the angels. In the beginning, God created them to be the helpers of His Son in His dealings with men. This office they have fulfilled. Have they ceased to fulfil it? All know the general disbelief in the activity of angels, good or evil. It is not said that many Christians disbelieve theoretically in their existence, but that, practically, to most they are as non-existent. This is especially true of the good angels. When we consider how important a part they have played in man's history, and their ministry to the Lord when on earth, and what is

foretold of their ministry in the future, we may well wonder that they have so utterly died out of the faith of the Church. In some parts of it, belief in the Virgin Mary, or in departed saints, as our helpers, is substituted for it. Yet, if we believe the Scriptures, as the angels have played a great part in the past, so they are to play even a greater part in the future. We are told that when the King shall return to sit upon the throne of His glory, all the holy angels will be with Him. They will be the reapers of the harvest (Matt. 13: 29). Michael and his angels overcome the dragon and his angels (Rev. 12: 7), and an angel binds Satan and casts him into the abyss.

If we turn to the evil angels—Satan and his hosts—we see how closely their history interpenetrates that of man. From the Fall of Adam to the Temptation of Christ, they have been active to deceive and lead astray. God has also made use of them as instruments to inflict His judgments. They appear continually along the pathway of the Lord, in demoniacal possessions and other diseases, thus giving Him manifold occasions for the exercise of His power. They tempt Judas to his destruction, they stir up the hostility of the people, and oppose the Lord in all His work. The Apostle John says: "The whole world lieth in the evil one" (1 John 5: 19. R. V.). The Lord has given us the petition. "Deliver us from the evil one" (R. V.).

Great Satanic activity in the future is foretold. To the Beast, Satan gives his power and great authority (Rev. 13: 2-). He also enables the false prophets with him to work signs and wonders, to deceive. When cast out of the heavenly region, he descends to the earth, to gather all its kings to the day of the great battle. During the Kingdom period, he is bound, but when loosed he deceives the nations. There is no assured peace on earth till he is cast into the lake of fire.

It is plain that to ignore the existence of evil spirits is a most dangerous thing, and especially is this so when Satan and his angels come in the guise of angels of light. His teachings will then be what the world at large most desires to hear, because most flattering to its pride, and even many Christians will be so deceived as to say, "These are not the words of a devil, they are the words of God." No enemy is so dangerous as a secret one. An army that marches carelessly and securely through an hostile land will surely come to grief, and so those who dwell where Satan is god and prince, and ignore his existence, will be taken captive by him at his will. It is presumptuous folly to ignore an enemy whom the Lord called "the prince of this world," and against whose deceptions the Apostles often warned the Church.

Another point in which our faith fails is seen in the current notions of death and of the resurrection. Death in the Scriptures is presented as

"the wages of sin," and the work of Christ is to make us free from the law both of sin and death (Rom. 8: 2). But many deny any connection between death and sin. They affirm that death is a purely natural event, necessary through the physical constitution of man; it is not, therefore to be feared. We are to meet it as the beasts meet it. It is true that most who say this deny any future existence, embodied or disembodied. On the other hand, there are many who affirm that death is the real entrance into life. The body is a clog to the spirit, and we are happily rid of it. If this be so, any resurrection of the body is incredible. All teaching of the Scriptures respecting it is to be rejected, and even the resurrection of Christ given up as a fact. Instead of speaking of a new heaven and earth, where the righteous dwell in glorified bodies, we must speak of "a spirit-land," a dim region of ghosts and phantoms. This exaltation of death and of the disembodied state is seen in making dead men joint intercessors with Christ, and in offering to them our prayers for their help. All this shows strikingly how little the fact that death is "the wages of sin" enters into the spirit of our religious belief, and how little faith we can have in the fact of the Lord's resurrection, or belief in our own. This is also seen in the disuse of the rite of the anointing of the sick, as a Church ordinance, and in the absence of earnest prayer that the

Lord may speedily return and bring the departed with Him.

We may note also how the sin of the Jews in the rejection of God as their theocratic King, and in the choice of a man to be their ruler, has repeated itself in the Church. For Christ, the Divine but invisible Head, must be substituted an earthly and visible one, thus making the Church a secular Power. It takes its place among the kingdoms of this world, superior to them all, indeed, because its head as Christ's vicar has authority over all. The many evil consequences from thus confounding the ecclesiastical and the secular, the priestly and the kingly, are seen on every page of Church history.

The change of the Church from a commonwealth to a monarchy brought with it a narrowness of judgment and loss of charity and sympathy most prejudicial to the work the Lord had given His Church to do. The Heavenly Head only has all fulness. No one man, however enlarged, mentally and morally, can contain it. He could express Himself in His wisdom and power only through an office in which all types of human nature should be represented and united. This was the Apostolate, His elders, chosen by Him. When the twelvefold Apostolate gave place to a single man as the earthly head, the inevitable result was that upon the Church at large was impressed his individual characteristics.

In his teachings, his favourite doctrines could be made prominent; in his administration, his personal likings; in his political action, his notions of public policy. How greatly these personal characteristics have affected the history of the Church every reader of Church history knows. Who can believe that if the rule of the Heavenly Head, through apostles chosen by Him, had directed the action of His children, there would have been the Crusades, or the Dragonnades, or the cruelties of the Inquisition, or the bloody religious wars between Christian nations, brethren in Christ?

The contrariety between the Church's claims to be the Divinely appointed instrument of God to establish righteousness and peace upon the earth, and the history of its own unrighteousness and strifes, is too glaring to escape notice; it awakens unbelief and must provoke the just indignation of the Lord.

But without entering into specific details, we may say in general that the tendency of the present time is to substitute Christ's principles for His Person. This is especially seen in the humanitarian spirit which makes Christianity to be essentially good-will to men, and labours for their improvement. The Lord, it is said, will redeem the world by His teaching of social ethics. His works on earth are often referred to as an example. But what were His works? We are told

that when on earth "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts 10: 38). If the acceptance of His principles enabled us to do the same works, a great change in human society for the better would speedily appear. But to do the good works He did, we must be, as was He, "anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power." The world acting on ethical Christian principles would indeed be morally another world, but principles are but foundation stones on which a builder must build. Except as brought into action in living men, they are ineffectual abstractions. They will not convey the supernatural life, nor bring the resurrection of the dead, nor the new heaven and earth. Redemption is a work, not a system of ethics, and a continually progressive work.

To do good to our fellow-men is a fundamental principle of Christianity, but what is the end aimed at? It is not some small and transient improvement of man's temporal condition, nor any degree of social progress. The good that the Lord sets before him is far higher than the highest civilisation. It is the Kingdom of righteousness and peace, of immortality and glory. Of this Kingdom He is the King, and only under Him can all nations be blessed. All our real progress is to be judged of by the place given Him in the rule of the world.

The substitution of the Lord's principles for

His Person works in the Church the same evil as did the substitution of the Law for the personal rule of Jehovah among the Jews. Judging ourselves by any ethical standard, we shall surely mistake our spiritual condition. He must judge us "whose eyes are as a flame of fire."

Mention has been made of the degree to which unconscious hypocrisy prevailed among the Jews in the Lord's day, and how difficult, therefore, it was for Him to reveal to them their true condition. It may be questioned whether this hypocrisy does not prevail in equal degree in the Christian Church. We may, like the young ruler (Luke 18: 21), say: All God's commandments have we kept, what lack we yet? Will He not say to us, "Sell all that thou hast . . . and follow Me"? In the church at Laodicea, representing the last phase of the Christian dispensation, this spirit of unconscious hypocrisy appears fully developed. "[We] are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Will He not say to us, as He said to Laodicea: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3: 17-)?

It is because of this spirit of self-sufficiency and self-complacency that it is so hard for us to believe that any Divine judgment can come

upon us. It seems to be taken for granted in all quarters that the Head of the Church, though not wholly pleased with its history and its present condition, is not greatly displeased, much less does He see anything to provoke His severe judgments. Do we in this read aright the mind of the Lord? What does the Old Testament teach us? What sore judgments did He inflict upon His covenant people of old for their disobedience and sinfulness; and will He judge less severely those to whom He has given the highest measure of spiritual light and grace, and whose sins, therefore, have greater enormity? If He could say to the Jewish Church, "I have brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Isa. 1: 2), what will He say to the Christian Church? Brought into the closest communion with Him through the Incarnate Son, and blessed with all spiritual blessings, has it fulfilled His purpose in it? Has it obeyed and honoured its Head, and walked in all holy conversation and godliness? Have the nations seen in it a model of unity, righteousness, and peace? If His anger burned against His ancient people, the house of Moses, His servant, how much more against His Church, the house of His own Son (Heb. 3: 6). How must His heart be pained, and His spirit filled with indignation, that those lifted up to sit with Him in the heavenly places, the nearest and dearest to Him, should have fallen after the example of

Jewish unbelief. As the sin of His Church is committed against greater knowledge, must not its punishment be the more severe?

That there are terrible judgments before us (how near or how distant we need not here ask), we know from the words of our Lord Himself. We need only refer to His words (Matt. 24: 21). He tells us that before His coming, there will be such tribulation as never was before, nor ever after shall be. Are these idle words? Have they no meaning for us of to-day? Can we read them with perfect unconcern? We know that there have been days in the past which may be distinguished as days of God's anger and fearful judgments, yet all were but foreshadowings of the judgment that comes upon the world when the wickedness of man has come to the full.

Two questions here meet us: What is the highest measure of human wickedness—man's culminating sin? And what signs of it do we now see?

We have already considered the relation of the reasonable creature to his Creator, whether it be one of dependence or independence. Shall the creature, angel or man, or other, obey God, or may he act according to his own will? It is a question to be settled in the beginning of creature history, and in the nature of man.

If we look backward, many and diverse have been the sins of men in the past, but none have

been like the sins of the last days. There is a development of wickedness. Always before have men recognised some Power higher than themselves, whose will they were to obey, and, however mistaken their notions of this Power, they acknowledged its authority, even when they disobeyed it. The culminating sin of man, the sin of the last days, is the denial of any personal Power higher than himself—of any will above his own.

This denial of a God takes several forms. First, the atheistic. The purely material atheism is generally discarded and we need not dwell upon it. Now there is put in the place of God an unknowable Energy or Force, diffused through the universe, but beyond the grasp of human thought, and working without beginning, or end, or purpose. We may be vaguely conscious of it, but it has neither intelligence nor will. Between such an Energy and man, there can be no moral relation, no sympathy, no communion, no obedience or disobedience, no sin, and no punishment. This is in fact atheism.

Again, with some, the denial of a God takes another form, the pantheistic. The distinction between the Divine and human, between the Creator and the created, is blotted out. God is not a person, He has neither intelligence nor will. There has been no creation, the finite is co-eternal with the infinite. The worlds have always

existed, and without them, God would not be God. They are an integral part of Him. Man, as a part of the infinite, has no finite independence, no moral freedom or responsibility; in him God comes to self-consciousness. Man is, therefore, in the fullest sense Divine.

Thus, if God be "an impersonal Energy," or be "the Absolute," there can be no one Incarnate Son. We cannot speak of Him as revealing God, or as a Redeemer, for there is no sin and no redemption, no heaven, no hell. Christianity is blotted out of existence. Incarnation ceases to have any meaning. There is no place in the universe for the Incarnate Son, and no need of Him.

But we may briefly note the doctrine of the Immanency of God, now often presented, which, though not denying His personality, or, in direct terms, the Incarnation, yet tends to make it of comparatively little value. God, we are told, is so in man by his spiritual constitution that a Mediator is scarcely necessary. He reveals Himself immediately, and speaks alike to all. He is in every man's soul. To say that we may have immediate intercourse with God is not, indeed, to say that we are God, but it narrows the work of the Incarnate Son, both as the Revealer of the Father and as the Way of approach to Him. One has said: "Man is conscious of an immanent soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in

a firmament, justice, love, freedom, arise and shine." But the Lord's words are to be strictly taken. "No man cometh to the Father but by Me." Those holding the Divine immanency in its more advanced form stand on a slippery declivity, down which it is easy to slide into the abyss of pantheism.

We may now understand why the judgments of God should be so severe at the end of this dispensation. It is because the sin of man has attained its highest possible degree. It is the culmination of creature pride. If a man say, "I am God," he is lifted up into a region of haughty self-complacency where no words of the Father can affect him. He is deaf to all solicitations, he hears no warnings, he fears no judgments. How shall such a son of pride be brought to a full sense of his sinfulness and weakness? It can be only through heavy chastisements. He must be made to feel that there is One above him who has the right to demand obedience, and whom he must obey.

If, therefore, the Lord spoke of such a time of tribulation as never had been, nor should be again, we see in what connection it stands to man's culminating sin. God's very existence denied, His Son rejected and despised, His faithful children persecuted—all this, indeed, may be done by the atheist, and yet repentance and pardon be possible. But when man says, "I am

God," what can the Father do but put forth His avenging hand, and cast the lawless one who thus speaks, and all his hosts, into the lake of fire?

Does any one say that it is impossible that man should rise to such a pitch of pride and presumption as to claim for himself Divinity? Let him read what Saint Paul says of the man of sin, the lawless one, who seats himself in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God (2 Thess. 2: 3-9).¹ We are thus assured that this exaltation of man is yet to come. We must believe this, even if we see no present signs of it. There is one to come who will seat himself in God's throne, and will demand and receive the adoration of the nations. All whose names are not written in the book of life shall worship him (Rev. 13: 8).

¹ We give the words of Saint Paul as paraphrased by Prof. G. R. Stevens (*Messages of Paul*). 2 Thess. 2: 1-12: "I tell you plainly that certain events will occur before the Lord comes. There will be a signal manifestation of wickedness, culminating in the appearance of a false Messiah, who shall make the most blasphemous pretensions, even setting himself up as an object of supreme worship. . . . At present there is a certain power which is repressing those evil forces, so as to prevent their premature manifestation. In secret they are working, and preparing to break forth, but some one is holding them in check. For a time he will restrain them, then he will himself be removed, and thereupon the one who embodies this wickedness will assert himself. The Lord will then come in His glory and power, and utterly destroy the monstrous pretender, who with Satanic wickedness sought to deceive sinful men, and to prevent their being saved by Christ."

The question here meets us, Do we see the budding signs of this antichristian spirit? Are there those now preparing the way by their religious teachings? It may be admitted that the number of avowed atheists and pantheists is comparatively small, but this does not disprove the wide diffusion and great influence of their principles. The present bears all the marks of a transitional period, and the change within the last half-century in the reception of these errors is confessed by all thoughtful observers, and is hailed by many as a sign of "the maturing intelligence of our time." Not a few openly declare that Christianity is outgrown except as an ethical system.

If it were necessary, abundant quotations might be given from many quarters of the growth and wide diffusion of the pantheistic spirit especially.¹ That man can live and be blessed

¹ A very recent writer, eminent in the scientific world, thus writes (*The Hibbert Journal*, April, 1904):

"We are rising to the conviction that we are a part of nature, and so a part of God. . . . We are no aliens in a stranger universe governed by an outside God, we are parts of a developing whole. . . . This sense of union with Divinity, this is what science will one day tell us is the inner meaning of the redemption of man. . . . As a matter of fact, the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment. . . . The savage inventions of a jealous God, who prevents the worship of anything but Himself, who thinks more of His own glory and dignity than of the creative work of evolution, who

without God is the teaching of atheism, but pantheism takes us a step onward. The race, it affirms, has outgrown its childhood, it has come to a consciousness of its Divinity, and with this its consciousness of absolute freedom. It was long ago said that "man will never be free so long as he believes in a God," and the spirit of this utterance is manifesting itself more and more. We are, it is proudly said, getting rid of the hindering superstitions of the past—a belief in a Creator and a creation, in an Incarnate Son, in sin and redemption, in a heaven and a hell. We hear not a few saying: Let the Bible rest on the shelf, a venerable but antiquated book, and let the Man of Galilee quietly sleep in His unknown grave. Let the dead past be buried; the work of to-day is to bring in the glorious kingdom of man.

We are now approaching the final stage of that controversy which began with the creation of reasonable beings, whether the will of the Creator or of the creature is to rule. We are taught by the inspired word what the end in its leading features is to be. The lawless one of Saint Paul (2 Thess. 2: 8), the Antichrist of Saint John (1 arranges that if people do not theorise correctly, here and now, they shall suffer eternal pain,—all these ignorances fall into the region of blasphemous fables, henceforth to be promulgated by fanatics alone."

In many reviews and magazines we may read like utterances, though not generally so baldly expressed.

John 4: 3), the Beast of the Revelation (Rev. 13: 1; 17: 11), appears; the godless rally around him; Satan accredits him with all signs and lying wonders (2 Thess. 2), and gives him his great power and authority. Now he forms the great antichristian confederacy (Rev. 17: 12), and as the choice was made by the Jews between Jesus and Barabbas, so again by Christendom, between Christ and Antichrist. Those who remain faithful to their Lord, and will not worship the Beast, nor receive his mark, are persecuted unto death (Rev. 15: 2). The mixed secular and ecclesiastical system symbolised by Babylon is cast down and thrown like a millstone into the sea (Rev. 18: 21). This reign of the Antichrist is the time of "the great tribulation" of which the Lord spake, but when the distress of His elect is at its height, the Lord Himself appears, the Beast is cast into the lake of fire, and Satan is bound. The Lord reaps His harvest of purified ones, his marriage with the Church takes place—the union in glory; and He establishes that Kingdom of righteousness under which all the nations are to be blessed.

Saint Paul affirms that even in his day "the mystery of lawlessness doth already work" (2 Thess. 2: 7), and Saint John said, "Even now have there arisen many antichrists" (1 John 2: 18). This antichristian spirit has been active all along in Christian history, but its culmination is not

till the end, when it finds full embodiment in the last Antichrist.¹ How near or how distant is his coming we do not know. Our Lord bids us note the signs of the times, not the physical only, but chiefly the moral and religious. Do not we already see "the abomination of desolation," or the abominable desolator, entering into the Holy Place? Are not the kingdoms of the earth—the mountains—sinking into the sea (Psa. 46: 2)? And out of the sea comes the Beast, who rules the nations as their god (Rev. 13).

Such being the future opening before us, how earnestly should we cry: "Lord, have mercy upon us!" The questions which the Church of to-day should ask itself are: How long will the Head endure the dishonour brought on Him among the nations? How long will He tolerate the semi-anarchy that now prevails in His Church, and makes it impossible for Him to fulfil His purpose? Is He not justly angry with His people to whom He has given such grace and honour? Is He not even now kindling that fire in Zion that shall purge away the dross, the fire of His love that purifies, not destroys? Does not the Father's anger burn as He looks upon the nations bearing the name of His Son, and sees how little His King is honoured by their rulers, or obeyed as

¹ For a fuller discussion of the signs of the approach of Antichrist see the writer's *Christianity and Antichristianity in their Final Conflict*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898.

One having authority over them (Psa. 2: 6)? How can this anger be turned away? It can only be by humble confession of our sin, and by sincere repentance. But this is not the spirit of our day. To fall upon our knees and cry, "Have mercy upon us," "Come, Lord Jesus, and save us," are the acts of the humble and penitent.

Here is the peril, that we justify ourselves, and walk on in the ways of division and strife, grieving the Holy Spirit and hindering the Lord in all His work. To mistake the purpose of God, to ignore the sins of His people, and to cry "Peace, peace," when he Has taken the sword of judgment into His hands, is the most fatal of errors. The false prophets of this class were, as we have seen, active in the Lord's day, and carried the multitude with them. Are they less active in our own? God is long-suffering, but His purpose may not fail through the weakness and wickedness of man. Unwillingness to believe that God would forsake His Temple and permit His holy city to be destroyed, made the false prophets of old deceive the people by their flattering predictions. Is it not so to-day? Is not the belief deeply fixed and wide-spread that the honour of the Head of the Church forbids the thought that it can fail to do His will? We are God's elect; therefore all is well with us. May not the words of Saint Paul teach us as to the Divine ways (1 Cor. 5: 5)? As God's minister, the Apostle delivers a trans-

gressor "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." May not the Lord act in like manner with His disobedient people? May He not give them into the hands of Satan, and of his vicegerent the Beast, during the great tribulation, not for eternal destruction, but for purification, that they may be saved?

It was long ago said by an English writer, C. Maitland, speaking of the trial of Christian believers at the end, that "in that day of unequalled trouble . . . there will be the torture of sickening doubt, withering and racking despair. The grounds of faith will be so obscured as to render argument hopeless. . . . In former persecutions there has ever been an easy answer to the blasphemies; but now it will be man's first difficulty to realise the faith for which he is called to suffer. . . . In that day Christianity will seem to the world to have been a dream." Is not that day near at hand?

Let me add a word to those to whom this book is dedicated,—believers in Christ Jesus as the Incarnate Son of God, but troubled and dismayed by the antichristian tendencies and movements around them. To you, my friends, let me recall our Lord's words, spoken to His anxious disciples just before His departure: "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Yes, Lord Christ, we do believe in Thee. Help Thou our unbelief. Strengthen

our faith. Let Thy promise be fulfilled to us: "Peace I leave with you, My peace give I unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Help us, O Son of God, Head of the Church, Great High Priest, Prince of the Kings of the Earth, to abide in Thy peace, and strengthen us so to follow Thee, that we may be "counted worthy to escape the things that shall come to pass," and to stand with Thee upon Thy holy Hill.

SUMMARY

LET us now sum up the points we have made. God, Infinite, Eternal, Incomprehensible, wills to create. The beings He will create, He will make in His own image, with power to know, and love, and serve Him. For their habitations He will make material worlds with certain properties and laws, and give to His rational beings material bodies correspondent to their material environment. He will create light that all His material works may be visible to His creatures, but He Himself remains invisible. With Creation time begins.

The motive of this Creation is love. God will give to His creatures all that is possible of His own perfections and thus ensure their highest blessedness. He will make Himself known to them and take them into closest communion. But how will He make Himself known to them? The highest form of His revelation is through the Incarnation of the Son, and this is that determined in the Divine Counsels anterior to Creation. The Son will be the medium of this revelation, the Revealer. But how will He, a person of the Trinity, and invisible, reveal Himself to the

creature? He will take a creature nature into union with His own, and thus be the visible and perfect medium of Divine revelation.

We thus see the relation of Incarnation to Creation. For the Son, who in due time was to become Incarnate, were all things made. He, as God-man, was the Divine Ideal, the pattern of perfect creaturehood, before Creation began, and the Corner-stone upon which it should rest. The nature to be taken by Him existed, therefore, in the Divine intent before it was made. For the Son it was made, that through it, assumed by Him, He might best reveal the Godhead to the reasonable creatures yet to be created.

Humanity, being the creature-nature chosen by God to be the medium of Divine revelation through the Son Incarnate, was made what it is with its manifold powers and capacities. It is, therefore, the highest of created natures, the best fitted for the manifestations of God; and most capable of communion with Him.

If first in order of the Divine purpose, was this nature first also in the order of creation? Did God create before man other and lower orders of rational beings? The creation of man was at the beginning. Angels indeed were made before man, but with reference to him, and as the helpers of men, and inseparably associated with them in the Divine purpose. But the human nature in this purpose has a higher place than the angelic,

because to be taken into the Godhead. The Bible knows of but these two types of creature being, now existing, angels and men. With their creation, creature history began.

Though created good, angels and men must be tested whether or not they would abide in that goodness, and walk in obedience to the Divine commands. Both failed under the trial. Satan and other angels rebelled, and Adam disobeyed the Divine command, and thus came under the law of sin and death, and the earth under a curse. In them all creaturehood had its trial.

The Son, who as the Word had been the Creator, must now act as the Redeemer. Beginning at the fall of Adam, He carries on as the Word the redemptive work, till, the fulness of time having come, He takes upon Him human nature, He is born of the Virgin, the Word is made flesh and enters upon His earthly ministry. Rejected by the covenant people, He is crucified, dead, and buried; but He rises from the dead in the power of a new and supernatural life, and ascends into Heaven, and is made Head of the Church and Great High Priest. These offices He fulfils till the time for taking His kingly power, when He comes forth from Heaven and seats Himself upon His throne. As King he carries on the work of redemption, separating the obedient from the disobedient, till all things, through successive acts of judgment, being made subject to Him and

Satan cast into the lake of fire, He gives up the redemptive Kingdom to the Father. The trial of creaturehood, in the angelic and human natures, is ended, the way is opened for the new creation, —the old made new.

The earth, being made to be man's dwelling-place, and the place where the Son would become Incarnate, its whole material constitution and configuration were adapted to its end as the theatre of His work, and it had, therefore, a position in the universe higher than any other world could have.

The Incarnate Son enters upon the work of New Creation. This work, embracing His reasonable creatures, already begun in the Church through regeneration, the communication of the supernatural life, is extended to other worlds and their inhabitants.

In the New Creation will be seen the highest revelation of God, through the glorified Son, to all reasonable beings in all worlds and for ever, and their own highest blessedness ensured. The Head of this New Creation is the God-man. Through Him therefore humanity occupies the highest place in the universe.

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